

1976

1976: Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures - Full Text

Reuel Lemmons

James Fowler

Andrew Gardiner

E. R. Brannan

Stephan Bilak

See next page for additional authors

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Recommended Citation

Lemmons, Reuel; Fowler, James; Gardiner, Andrew; Brannan, E. R.; Bilak, Stephan; Maxwell, James; Rogers, Richard; Welch, Alonzo; Osburn, Carroll; Kelcy, Raymond; and Douglas, Bob, "1976: Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures - Full Text" (1976). *Lectureship Books*. Paper 46.

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Authors

Reuel Lemmons, James Fowler, Andrew Gardiner, E. R. Brannan, Stephan Bilak, James Maxwell, Richard Rogers, Alonzo Welch, Carroll Osburn, Raymond Kelcy, and Bob Douglas

EDWIN H. ENZOR

“FREEDOM IN CHRIST”

being the
Abilene Christian College
Annual Bible Lectures
1976

Published by

ABILENE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Book Store

ACC Station

Abilene, Texas 79601

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PREFACE

This Bicentennial of national celebration calls us back as a nation to a re-evaluation and deeper appreciation of our rich heritage and the many freedoms which we enjoy. As one travels around the world observing various societies, he returns to his home to "count his blessings" and to praise God for the kind of life that is available to the citizens of this great country.

The Christian knows, however, that there is a freedom far more precious because it is an inner freedom which can belong to the child of God, even in the midst of tyranny. It is a freedom which knows no earthly limitations.

As one observes the tyranny of sin in human life, his heart must radiate with praise for his own freedom, but this heart must also yearn with the heart of God to share the precious message of freedom with those so tyrannized by the gods of this world.

As we take our national freedoms for granted, we also are in danger of taking our spiritual freedoms for granted, and even treating them with contempt. In this Bicentennial year as we celebrate our national freedom, let us also reaffirm our commitment to Jesus in whom is the greatest of all freedoms.

This volume goes forth with the fervent prayer that the messages it contains may bless the lives of future generations as they blessed the hearts of those who heard them as they were presented at the 58th Annual Bible Lectureship at Abilene Christian College.

CARL BRECHEEN

Lectureship Director

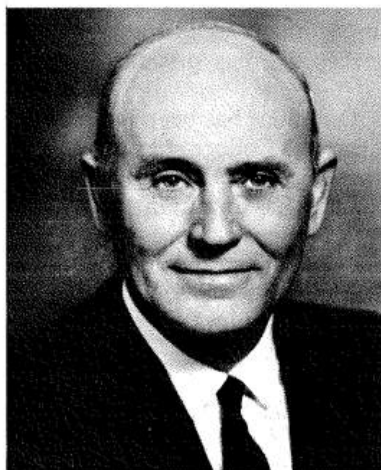
Main Speeches

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

REUEL LEMMONS

Reuel Lemmons was born July 8, 1912 in Pocahontas, Arkansas. He was reared in Tipton, Oklahoma, and graduated from Abilene Christian College in 1935. He returned to Tipton to preach for the Tipton church for eight years.

In 1943 he became minister at the Central church in Cleburne, Texas, where he labored for 12 years. During that time he spearheaded a drive to plant congregations in the Union of South Africa, and for 7 years conducted a radio



program over the powerful Lorenzo-Marques radio in Mozambique. It was out of these sermons and the contacts made that our present day work in Nigeria has grown. He was also instrumental in sending and supporting missionaries in many of our northwestern states.

He has continued his interest in mission work, and in recent years has encouraged the expanding work in Central and South America. In 1962 he founded the Pan American Lectureship.

In 1955, Lemmons became editor of the Firm Foundation and continues in that capacity at this time. He has served since its beginning on the staff of the 20th Century Christian and has authored two books: *Abundant Living*, and *The King and His*

Kingdom. He edited the *Majestic Hymnal*, a hymn book widely used among the churches, and the *New Smith's Bible Dictionary*.

He continues an extensive schedule of Gospel meetings, having conducted more than 1,000 meetings. He has appeared on all the Bible Lectureship programs and on numerous teacher training and leadership training seminars brotherhood-wide. His preaching has carried him into more than 60 foreign lands, and he has played important roles in the establishing of new congregations in many places. He has preached on every inhabited continent.

Lemmons has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Abilene Christian College since 1950, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Pepperdine University since 1971. He is a member of the Board of the Dallas Christian Education Foundation and serves in some capacity on numerous other good works.

A number of honors have been bestowed upon him, including honorary doctorates from Abilene Christian College and Pepperdine University.

His wife is the former Imogene Mayes. They were married in Abilene, Texas, in 1933, and have two sons, Norvel, born in 1935, and Leon, born in 1942. The family home is at 5801 Wynona, Austin, Texas.

It is difficult for us in the twentieth century to realize the extent and severity of the oppression and slavery of the Jews in Jesus' day. Freedom from Rome was to them a thing to be devoutly desired. They thought that the Messiah would provide it for them and when he died, they said, "We verily thought that it was he who would restore Israel."

The seed of Abraham began to be a people while in bondage. For 430 years they languished in Egypt as slaves.

God delivered them by the hand of Moses and led them for forty years while they wandered in the trackless wilderness. Then by the hand of Joshua He caused them to cross over Jordan where they lived in houses they had not built, drank water out of wells they had not dug, and ate grapes from vineyards they had not planted.

When an emergency arose God raised up from among them Judges who delivered them. When they kept God's law they prospered; when they broke it they were punished.

Then the people wanted a king and God gave them Saul. He was followed by David, and David by Solomon. During the reign of Solomon Israel expanded until it possessed all the lands God had promised to Abraham.

Then the kingdom was divided. The northern half, Israel, after a succession of bad kings, was finally annihilated by the Assyrians. The southern half, Judah, held out a little longer, but finally fell to the Babylonians. And for seventy years the Jews served the Babylonians.

At the end of that period Zerubbabel returned with a remnant to rebuild the temple, and later Nehemiah came under commission of Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of the city. This did not mean, however, that the captivity of the Jews had ended. Jerusalem and Judah continued as a vassal of the king of Babylon, paying exorbitant taxes, and being subjected to all the indignities of slavery.

During the 400 years between the testaments Judah became the footmat of marauding armies. Alexander the Great conquered the land. Then came Ptolemy of Egypt to plunder. Two city-states even conquered the land. Then came Greece and after that the Romans. Judah was in constant turmoil. The

Jews mounted more than 30 rebellions in 400 years and lost every one of them. Each defeat left them more exhausted and bankrupt. The heel of the oppressor ground them deeper and deeper into slavery. What a welcome sight the star of Bethlehem must have been!

Sometimes I feel that we do not get the actual picture of the degraded and enslaved condition of the Jews from reading the four gospels. A clearer grasp would help us to understand the anguish in the plea of the disciples, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" It would help us to understand the thought in the heart of the mother of Zebedee's children who asked that when Jesus came into His kingdom He would allow one of her sons to sit on His right hand and the other on His left. It was exceedingly hard to make the Jews understand that, "My kingdom is not of this world."

And so freedom was foremost in the heart and soul and mind of the Jew who was born in slavery. Paul was the exception in that he was "born free." Jesus understood this longing in the Jewish heart and spoke to it when He said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, then are you free indeed." The nature of the freedom He had in mind is indicated by His words: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

In this year, in which the nation is celebrating 200 years of freedom, it is fitting that we stress the greatest of all freedoms—freedom in Christ. While people are conditioned by the mass media for appreciating the beauty and blessings of liberty we may well gain an ear for the presentation of spiritual freedom. No joy is so sweet as that which comes to one whose sins have been forgiven. No blessing is so conducive to happy, abundant living as the blessing of freedom in Christ. It would

be incongruous to stress the freedoms that relate to the physical man alone, while we ignore the freedom of the spirit of man. This is the year to let the freedom ring loud and clear.

After Israel had been seasoned in Egypt for 430 years, the fullness of time finally came. Deliverance was at hand. God raised up a preacher of liberty for the captives, and provided through grace the means of their escape. The liberated nation was His handiwork, and His law delivered from the top of smoking Sinai was their Magna Carta. While they kept the law they prospered; when they broke it they were punished. Israel's liberty was provided by grace and circumscribed by law.

In the fullness of time, as the prophets had foretold and the poets had sung, God sent another Deliverer to proclaim liberty to the captives and to set them free. Down out of the ivory palaces He came, giving up the glory that was His since before the foundation of the world. He set the angels singing, "Peace on earth and good will to man." From a bondage millenniums longer, and far more severe, this One "like unto Moses" delivered those who "all their lifetime were subject to bondage." As all Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, so also did they drink of that spiritual rock that followed them—which rock was Christ.

"We have not come unto a mountain that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor into blackness, and darkness; and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet—but unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. . ."

Jesus, "being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands. . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; so much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

If the first covenant was glorious, so glorious that the people could not steadfastly look upon the countenance of Moses, and it became necessary for him to wear a veil, which glory was to be done away, how much more glorious is the glory of that which remaineth?

The law was but a shadow of the good things to come. It was but a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. It could not make the worshippers perfect, and did not provide freedom, even for the Jew. Paul tells us that if it had been possible for the law to forgive sins, there never would have been a change in the law. God expressed dissatisfaction with sacrifices and burnt offerings, and would not accept them. Instead He prepared a body for Jesus. That body Jesus then offered once and for all as the sacrifice that could remove sin forever. ". . . But now in the end of the age has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifices of himself."

Our modern world is prone to stagger at the meaning and ministry of Jesus Christ. The price of discipleship is exceedingly high, and our willingness to pay it is often very weak. It must be confirmed repeatedly that the only hope of freedom from sin rests in our total repentance and turning.

Jesus came into the world for only one purpose: to set us free. His gospel was the proclamation of liberty to captives. His work was that of atonement. The scarlet thread reserved for the brow of the scapegoat was to become a crown of thorns. He had to become sin for us, and God was to lay upon Him the iniquity of us all. Our emancipation proclamation was to be written in blood—the blood of the cross.

In that beautiful Psalm of Messiahship, the 118th Psalm, the author says, "I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: What can man do unto me?" Then he exclaims: "I shall not die, but live. . . ." Then follows that marvelous passage: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it." Finally, the psalmist exclaims, ". . . Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."

Eighteen times in the book of Leviticus explicit instructions are given for the slaying of the various sacrifices. In those sacrifices that had to do with atonement, the priest was commanded to dip his finger in the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle the blood "upon the horns of the altar." Now the horns of the altar were protrusions from each of the four corners, made of the same wood as the altar and presumably extending straight out from the altar for bearing the weight of the altar as the staves were thrust through its rings under the horns and lifted to the shoulders of the bearers. If you looked at the end of the altar you would see the rough outlines of the cross. And the sacrifice of all time was bound by the cords of God's eternal love to the horns of the altar, and His blood was sprinkled there, not that a remembrance might be made once and again for sin, but that sin might forever be washed away.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Through the ages there has been a great controversy over who is responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Some blame the Jews, saying that they crucified him. Others blame the Romans. The Pope, a couple of years ago “absolved” the Jews of all blame. It could be devoutly wished that he would get around to absolving the Romans, so that we could get down to dealing with who it was that really crucified Jesus. Do you know who crucified Jesus? You did. You may say, “I am not guilty. My fingers do not drip with the blood of Jesus,” but they do. If you had not been a sinner, Jesus would not have died.

We sometimes hear disdain and sarcasm heaped upon those who exhort their hearer to “take Jesus as your personal savior.” Bless your heart, if you do not take Jesus as your “personal savior,” you will not have a savior. He died for you as if you were the only person on the face of the earth who needed saving. It completely bankrupted heaven to provide salvation, not for the masses of men, but for you individually. God did all He could do, and Jesus went to the lowest depths he could go just to save you. He “emptied himself” to save you alone. His blood was not shed for the masses, but for you. He is your savior in a very personal way.

And He did it voluntarily. No man took His life from Him; He laid down His life for His sheep. On one occasion He vowed that He could ask the Father and the Father would send ten legions of angels to do His bidding, but He didn’t ask, and the Father didn’t send. There was no possible way for the cup to pass from Him. He had to drink it. He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He was that supreme

sacrifice to which every sacrificial offering from Abel down had pointed. "He came to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And "by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Into a world groping in the total darkness of complete hopelessness and despair, came the Son of righteousness with healing in His wings. The Rose of Sharon bloomed in a desert land and a Rock was cleft in a desert land. Weary and heavy laden humanity could cast its burdens on the lord, for He it was who cared enough to bear them. Though He was rich, yet He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

Our efforts to make accountable souls knowledgeable of the truth that makes men free must never cease. Necessity is laid upon us to preach the gospel. Never was there a commission so great, nor responsibility so heavy, as that of preaching the gospel to every creature. It is the message of the ages because it contains the only hope of the world. With Paul we can say, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." A sense of urgency should grip us because a veritable avalanche of humanity is constantly pouring over the brink into the chasm of eternity in a lost condition.

That the freedom of which we speak is ours by the grace of God none of us doubts for a moment. The longer we live and the more conscious we are of our sins, the more sure we are that if we are ever set free it will be by the unmerited favor of Almighty God. No works of righteousness that we have done would ever earn enough "Brownie points" that God would have to give us a crown with stars in it. Our freedom from sin is the free gift of God. The amazing thing about grace is the extent to which a loving God would go to make salvation possible to a rebellious and impenitent world.

No sound could possibly be sweeter than the sound of the gospel of God's grace. Confused and estranged lives can be altered, and hopelessness can be banished when we put the emphasis upon the meritorious death and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ. Out of living death into life everlasting, abundant and eternal, have the nail-pierced hands delivered us. We must go to the people where they are, and start with what we find, and relate to them the gospel of their salvation. They all need the blood of Jesus. It is the necessity of the moral and the only hope of the depraved.

"Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death" is the universal cry of a wretched race. Despite the fact that we enjoy an economic system that provides unparalleled affluence, and an endless stream of material goods flows from the seemingly endless technological advancement of our day, man experiences a spiritual vacuum, and an emptiness perhaps unequalled in human history. As never before he is conscious of the fact that he is a prisoner in a situation filled with pollution and problems beyond his power to either control or alleviate. There is a yearning in the land to "know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." There is a notion abroad in the land that this is where real freedom really lies.

Jesus one time said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Nothing else will make you free. Error has always been a symbol of bondage, and truth has always been a symbol of liberty. We are a people who have sworn undying allegiance to the sacred Scriptures as our only rule of faith and practice. We would not dare to add one jot or tittle, or to venture a single step beyond what God has said. We believe that the only right of the church to exist rests upon its faithfulness to stay within the limits of God's self-revelation. We believe that freedom rests squarely upon the infallible

certainty of the Word of God, and not on our human opinions. Only "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Among a people who profess this faith and vow this practice there will always be a healthy respect for a "thus saith the Lord." We do not believe in liberty from law; we believe in liberty within the law. Christ is our only king and His law is our only authority. He is the foundation, the head and the keystone of the church. It is His body and His bride. He is our all in all, and without Him the church disintegrates. Thus, we speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent. This stance in no way restricts our liberty. Rather, it enhances it. Anywhere He leads us we are perfectly free to follow.

If the restoration principle is invalid, then the Bible is not the word of God, but instead, contains the word of God. If this vague and insecure view is taken it genders bondage and not liberty. This is the course of classic liberalism. A church that will not discipline itself to maintain a Biblical pattern will not long be able to maintain either doctrinal purity or faithful practice. It becomes derelict, and is cut adrift on the sea of time to become whatever its human elements mould it into. Some elements of the Restoration movement have followed this course to their shame and to their enslavement.

Freedom in Christ is not freedom from law. All authority in Heaven and on earth was given by the Father to Jesus. Jesus never gave any of it away; it still rests with Him. He shares it with neither man nor devil. The right to legislate and change has never rested in humanity; it has always rested in deity. And so it rests today.

REIGNING WITH CHRIST

When we have been freed from sin we have been set on a vantage point by the grace of God from which we fight the battles of life with every advantage. A Christian is not at a disadvantage, and fighting against great odds, as we sometimes preach it. Rather he has every encouragement and every advantage of the whole armour of God. He is not struggling up hill to reach a summit; the Grace of God has placed him on a summit. The problem of sin has been settled at Calvary, and man isn't struggling to overcome sin; he has been delivered from it. He is not fighting for a position but from a position.

One of the most profound principles of Christian liberty is the fact that we have died to sin. Sin no longer has dominion over us. We are freed from sin. Paul tells us in Romans 6 that we can't continue in sin because we have died to it. And then he says that we who have died to sin have been set free from sin. Repentance has done what human merit could never do. It has destroyed the love and practice of sin completely. We are freed from sin. This is the liberty with which Christ has made us free. If we die with Christ we shall also live with him, death no longer having dominion over us.

Christ becomes our savior and God becomes our Father and we have become new creatures. Old things have passed away and all things have become new because we have been set free and our lives are hid with God in Christ. We set our affections upon things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and are no longer conformed to the world but are transformed by the renewing of our minds. We are free from sin and death. The victory has been won. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not struggle for victory; we already have it. We do not fight our way to freedom; we have been set free. If we are

planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also share in the likeness of His resurrection.

When we ask God for grace to stand temptation we are not asking Him for power to make our human selves strong enough, that we may overcome it ourselves, but, rather, that He would make real in us the fact that we have died to sin and are alive unto righteousness. We can only be delivered from bondage through death. We can't fight our way through all our weakness, problems, and sins, but we can ask for the victory He has provided at Calvary. Peace never comes to our souls and victory is never ours as a result of our human efforts to overcome. These settle in our souls past comprehension when we accept in faith the fact that God has accepted us in the Beloved and forgiven our sins. This is the victory that overcomes the world; even our faith.

You are not climbing a hill. You are on a throne. The victory is not something to be won in the distant future; it is yours now. Your throne has been made ready; please sit down on it. The captive has already been made free. The conquered has, by the grace of God, become the conqueror. The captive has been set free. "We are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus and ordained unto every good work."

This liberty does not at all do away with either temptation or apostasy, but it does make our calling and election sure. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all unrighteousness:. . ." "By Grace are we saved through faith. . . ."

Millions inside and outside the church are spiritually weak, emotionally insecure, frustrated and unhappy simply because they have never grasped the significance of their freedom in

Christ. Their lives can be completely changed, and the opposites replace these diseases of the soul. Spiritual peace, emotional tranquility, and fierce joy that the world cannot take away can be ours simply by correcting our understanding of what it means to find Liberty in Christ.

Many have lost a sense of reverence and respect for the teachings of Jesus simply because they have come to view them as the philosophical utterances of a great teacher, rather than the words of the Living God. When human beings pick at the Scriptures as a child would pick at a rose to find out from whence comes its fragrance, they destroy it, in so far as their faith is concerned. The word of God subjected to human criticism is by human standards discredited. Human criticism starts with the presupposition that we are dealing with a human document. No human document on earth, through all history, has ever made men free for long. The Word of God, unchanging through the centuries, is as able today as in ancient times to set men free. Paul, in Romans 1:16, affirms it to be "the power of God unto salvation."

LIBERTY AND TRIUMPH

The entire scope of Christian liberty is inseparably linked with the doing and dying of Jesus Christ. He died for our transgressions; He was raised for our justification. His death was necessary for atonement; His resurrection was necessary for intercession. Not only did He die to save us, He arose to intercede for us.

It is fitting right here to protest the gruesome details that permeate many sermons regarding the crucifixion. There is an element in depraved humanity that revels in suffering. Some even inflict suffering upon themselves. The ancients provided it in the arenas in order to satisfy their lust for that sort of

pleasure. We are even prone to agonize and empathize over the crucifixion scene. Preachers picture every gory detail, every convulsed muscle, every ounce of pain. They do it because humans love to indulge themselves in such emotion packed descriptions. The sounds of hammer blows and the sympathetic feel of tearing flesh is always a part of the presentation. The fact of the cross is important, the gory details are not. It is wholly possible to preach the cross and the atonement without all this, which really has nothing to do with God's laying upon Him our iniquities.

None of the apostles ever made such emotional appeals regarding the cross as we make, and the preaching of the gospel does not include such appeals to sympathy. The fact of the crucifixion in the plan of God is the thing that matters. The fact that He became our substitute, and that He bore our sins, is the thing that sets us free. The cross in the Bible is an act of God in human history through which, and by which, Jesus Christ destroyed the power of the Devil over the whole creation, and conquered him who had the power of death. In that act He set free those who all their lifetime had been subject to bondage. The cross is not a disaster; it is a triumph. Through it a liberated people reign with a conquering king. Paul gloried in it. He did not agonize in empathy over it. The cross is our standard and our flag; a thing to be held high and proudly preached.

And let us here de-bunk another tradition. I see a tendency to let the cross sink into oblivion in the glorious light of the radiant resurrection. Not so. The cross and the resurrection go together. Either is meaningless without the other. In the final analysis it is the crucifixion, for which the cross is simply a symbol, that is important. Paul preached Christ crucified—not a wooden cross. The glory of the risen Christ lies in the fact that it was this same Jesus who was crucified that was raised

up. The Jesus on whose breast John had leaned at the last supper was the same Jesus who promised the disciples that He would be with them always. The same Jesus whose feet Mary hugged at the cross was the Jesus whom the disciples saw ascending in clouds of glory to the ancient of days. This same Jesus who wore the thorns is the Jesus who wears the crown. The meaning of sacrifice can be correctly interpreted only in the meaning of Resurrection.

The one act of atonement keeps on expressing itself, giving liberty to sin shackled men, and shall do so until the Saturday evening of time. Men who sit in darkness see a great light because He was dead and is alive again. Let us thrust our fingers of faith into the nailprints and be not faithless but believing.

We do not have a dead Christ; we have a living Christ. Because He died men are set free, and because He lives again hope is breathed for the dying and the dead. Every generation of doomed men rejoice in the hope of the resurrection. Let the angels of heaven and the denizens of the deep proclaim that He was dead and is alive again—and He lives forevermore.

We have died to sin, and through the body of Christ have been washed, cleansed, and sanctified. We have risen with Him through faith in the resurrection of God who raised Him from the dead. The gates of hell shall no more prevail against us than they prevailed against our savior. Because He was the Son of God the grave couldn't hold Him. Because we are the sons of God death can't hold us. If we share the likeness of his death we shall also share the likeness of His resurrection, "for as in Adam all die, so also, in Christ shall all be made alive."

On the day of His ascension the angels sang, "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lifted up, everlasting doors, and

the King of Glory shall come in." In heavenly majesty He was swept to the right hand of God and there seated upon the throne of the King of Kings, from which position He now commands the ages as they roll. Liberated souls share the sweet and precious promise that one day He will return with the angels of Heaven to raise the dead and change the living, and that the righteous shall sweep through the gates that stand ajar to cast their crowns upon the sea of glass and shout with the elders and the angels, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God, the Almighty, he reigneth." And the elders and angels shall say "Amen."

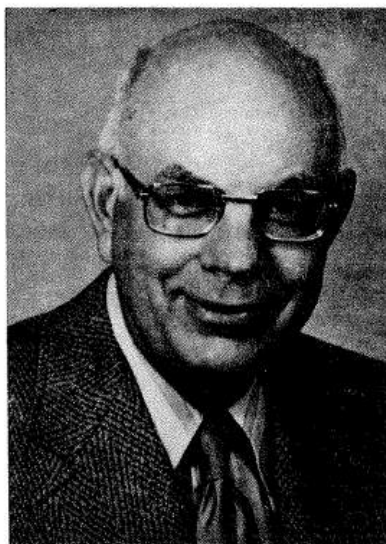
Finally free from all the shackles that sin has clamped upon humankind, we shall traverse the infinite domain of eternal freedom—forever happy and forever young.

THREATS TO OUR FREEDOM IN CHRIST

JAMES F. FOWLER

Born, reared and educated in Texas. Education: B.S. Degree from Abilene Christian College; M.E. Degree from Southern Methodist University.

Churches Served: Central Church of Christ, Temple, Texas, 1942-1944; Shamrock Shores Church of Christ, Dallas, Texas, 1944-1946; College Station Church of Christ, College Station, Texas, 1946-1956; Irving Church of Christ, Irving, Texas, 1956-1961; Central Church of Christ, Birmingham, Alabama, 1961-



Served as Narrator on the "Way of Truth," a weekly telecast over KRLD—Dallas, Texas, 1957-1961.

Speaker on "Messages From The Master," a weekly radio program which is now on about 25 stations in several States and one foreign country.

Teaches in 3 or 4 evangelistic meetings each year. Speaks on various lectureships, etc. Teacher of Bible in Alabama Christian College of Biblical Studies, Birmingham Extension.

Is an associate editor of "Christian Bible Teacher" and "Power For Today"; is a member of the Advisory Board of Alabama Christian College.

Married the former Lottie N. Netterville, Nashville, Tennessee. Has one son, three daughters, and one foster son.

Many years ago Max Muller observed:

If there is one thing which a comparative study of religions places in the clearest light it is the inevitable decay to which every religion is exposed. . . .every religion, even the most perfect, suffers from its contact with the world, as pure air suffers from being breathed. ¹

Within a few years after their beginning Paul wrote back to the churches of Galatia: ". . .how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more?" (Galatians 4:9 RSV).

Both divine revelation and human experience warn every generation to be on guard against

"THREATS TO OUR FREEDOM IN CHRIST"

This study will be divided into two parts, based on two challenging texts. From the epistle that has been called the "Magna Charta of The Christian Faith" and the "Charter of Christian Freedom," we read:

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery (Galatians 5:1 RSV).

The second text is also from Paul. It might well be called

“PAUL’S PERSONAL DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE.”

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me but I will not be enslaved by anything (1 Corinthians 6:12, RSV).

In the Galatian text Paul was warning against false teaching that threatened to enslave the whole church. In the Corinthian text Paul deals with threats to his own personal freedom in Christ that would be of his own making.

PART I

“Threats of False Doctrine”

If truth makes men free, then it follows that error takes away freedom.

The main threat to the freedom of the church is not that of persecutions and imprisonments. The real danger comes from **within**. In Paul’s day it came from zealous men in the church **who had not learned the difference between the law that came by Moses and grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ.** ²

In every age true religion has been troubled with legalistic teachers, men who give major emphasis to minor matters, and who stress the “letter” over the “Spirit.” Jesus had his problems with “gnat straining” Pharisees who, in their zeal

for tithing tiny seeds, left undone such weighty matters as faith, justice and mercy. ³

Paul in his fight to maintain Christian freedom had to deal with circumcision, sabbath keeping, and reverence for many human customs.

The period we call the "Dark Ages" produced a "Doctrine of salvation by works" that through the centuries has enslaved countless thousands.

In modern times we have a new set of issues threatening the freedom of God's people, but they have been begotten by the same attitudes that plague every generation. It is surprising how short a time is required for "customs" to turn into "commands," especially in the minds of those whose zeal exceeds their knowledge and understanding. Misguided zeal often fails to distinguish between the essentials of the law and the mere incidentals.

Over fifty years ago James Allen, a former editor of the Gospel Advocate, observed that "the nearer a body of people gets to the truth the more they are going to be agitated by hobbyists and cranks." Allen further observed that

The denominations around us, who make no pretense of standing on apostolic grounds, are not troubled with extremists pleading no literature, no Bible schools on Lord's Day, no benediction after the last song. . .etc., ad infinitum. . .one of the greatest tasks that devolved upon Campbell, Stone, Scott and others was to prevent the friends of truth from carrying it to unscriptural and injurious absurdities. . . .

I recall my father's telling about the problems he had where he was preaching when he suggested that they "pass a hat" to

take up collection rather than continue the cumbersome custom of "laying it on the table." In the Gospel Advocate David Lipscomb dealt with the fuss being made over how to take up the collection; he warned: "When people undertake to make laws how things should be done where God has made none, they commit sin." ⁵

Paul had to deal with circumcision; Lipscomb had to deal with contribution. What our grandchildren will be facing as threats to Christian liberty we know not, but take warning that the same attitudes of fanaticism, legalism, crankism (or whatever you want to call it) will be around as long as the earth stands and the church is populated with human beings.

We can also be sure that the extremes of legalism will beget the opposite extremes of liberalism.

Perhaps I should not be using these terms, "legalism" and "liberalism." They have in recent years been much used and much abused. By legalism and liberalism I am not referring to specific issues, but to the basic attitudes that create hurtful controversies. Legalism and liberalism are here used to identify opposite attitudes toward the authority of God's Word and the way of salvation. Legalism gives lip service to grace, but really trusts in man's ability to perfectly understand and obey the law in every detail. For this reason it is continually straining for gnats. Liberalism on the other hand gives lip service to the authority of the Bible, but in reality it sees the Bible as a human book; liberalism follows a philosophy of "cheap grace," which can result in license rather than liberty.

It is not legalism to insist on reverence for the Word of God as our only authority in faith and morals. Paul made this plain in Galatians 1:8. But neither is it liberalism to show tolerance for the views of sincere brethren who differ on important

interpretations, such as those regarding the Holy Spirit. In every age Christian liberty and doctrinal purity have been threatened by those who confuse LEGALISM with LOYALTY, and by those who excuse LICENSE on grounds of LIBERTY.

In Paul's fight for Christian liberty he warned of Judaizers and their legalistic attitudes toward the law. However, Paul realized that every time he took up the fight against one extreme he ran the danger of weak Christians being misled into an opposite extreme. Thus, as Paul challenged men to remain free men in Christ, he also warned: "for you were called to freedom, brethren: *only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. . .*" (Galatians 5:13). Peter put it this way: "Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext of evil, . . ." (1 Peter 2:16).

For many years the church has been plagued by divisive debates brought on by too much legalism and by too little love. It should be no surprise that we now face threats of liberalism in theology and license in morality. It should not surprise us that liberal extremes such as "Situation Ethics" have made inroads into the church. Situation ethics has been with us, in various forms, for a long, long time, but the philosophy has been popularized in recent years by Joseph Fletcher's book, *Situation Ethics*, published in 1966. Fletcher strongly denies that he advocates an irresponsible kind of liberty that gives license to do as one pleases.⁶

Yet he has admitted the need of a "corrective treatise" to offset the influence that his book may have in encouraging the permissive, "hang-loose" culture of our day.⁷

How much *Situation Ethics* has contributed to permissiveness in our society is a matter of opinion. William Barclay thinks

Fletcher's book is one of the most influential writings of this century. He does not say that it is the BEST book, or the most influential FOR GOOD. In fact, it is apparent from Barclay's own book, *Ethics In A Permissive Society*, that he believes that the publication of *Situation Ethics* has been a dangerous and damaging influence. ⁸

Fletcher's book is most dangerous to those who have been continually exposed to "legalism" and to the uniformed who think that anyone believing in Bible authority is a legalist. UP TO A POINT the situation ethics philosophy has much logic and truth. To deny that circumstances can determine the rightness or wrongness of behavior is to ignore both common sense and Biblical principles. For example: A physician takes liberties in treating a patient of the opposite sex that would be sinful in other circumstances. In the Bible we can see a form of situation ethics. Rahab lied in order to save the Israelite spies. ⁹ Jesus, in defense of his disciples, told how David and his men transgressed the law by eating the shewbread,¹⁰ yet were not condemned.

According to the law under which Jesus lived, a woman taken in adultery should be stoned. Yet, Jesus said to such a woman, "neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more" (John 8:11). However, there is a BIG DIFFERENCE in recognizing some exceptions to the law and refusing to recognize the law. Fletcher cites some Biblical examples, but the type that he dramatizes to support his philosophy are far different. He depends largely upon hypothetical illustrations in fiction, such as Nash's play, *The Rainmaker*, from which Fletcher tries to justify illicit sex. ¹¹

Regrettably, many will accept these hypothetical illustrations as proof positive; in reality they are only assumptions that good (and not more evil) will come from such transgression of

God's law. In such examples Fletcher assumes that there was no other way that a desired end could have been reached except that of violation of Biblical law. From such rare, fictitious exceptions and from other assumptions, he dogmatically contends that in decision making we should never be bound to any absolutes. He has much good to say about the "law of love," the one law that he recognizes. Yet, he leaves every man to decide for himself, regardless of his character, knowledge or maturity, what love is. Such is a terrifying degree of freedom. "There we are," as Barclay says,

. . . in front of our situation; we have no prefabricated judgment; you—just you—have to make the right decision. Brunner has said that there is nowhere you can go—not even to the Sermon on the Mount and say: 'Now I know what to do.' There is no such thing as a ready-made decision. ¹²

Fletcher has no corner on the love market. Christianity, more than any religion in the world, gives emphasis to love. Jesus put love for God and love for man as the greatest of all commands. But with Jesus there was no conflict between LOVE and LAW. It was because of God's love for man that he ordained law. Fletcher gives emphasis to Augustine's maxim, "Love with care, and then do what you will."¹³ We have no quarrel with this good slogan, provided it is used within the context of Jesus' words: "If you love me you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Law is for man's good, for his happiness, for his freedom.

Henry Ward Beecher has well observed:

Men are beaten about by so many passions that if a man is left perfectly free, he is a dangerous animal; we must, therefore, have governments for men . . . *Is there liberty*

where there is law? Yes, and there is no liberty anywhere else. ¹⁴

Fletcher says many things with which I agree, but after careful reading of his book, my overall evaluation of "Situation Ethics" is found in one of Fletcher's own illustrations. "It is like Oscar Wilde's mackerel in the moonlight; it glitters but it stinks." ¹⁵

PART II

Let us now go to the second major text.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me but I will not be enslaved by anything (I Corinthians 6:12).

Paul is, as it were, signing his own "Declaration of Independence." Anything that threatens the church threatens me as an individual. However, in this text Paul deals with threats to his own personal freedom for which he himself is responsible. He knew that things permissible and right within themselves could without the proper discipline, enslave him. We may not be threatened in the same way and by the same things, but the freedom of each one of us is threatened by our own failures at self-discipline.

WHAT ARE THREATS TO OUR PERSONAL FREEDOM IN CHRIST?

1. **MANY ARE ENSLAVED BY THEIR OWN BODIES.** The body is of God's creation. It has hungers and drives that are good and holy when kept within God's purpose. Undisciplined, the body can be a cruel master.

FOOD is necessary. How grateful we should be that we live in a land of plenty, yet this very blessing has to many become a curse. One can get hooked on calories as well as on cocaine.

ALCOHOL is valuable for many things, but it has enslaved nearly 10 million Americans and is a dangerous threat to millions of others.

OTHER DRUGS have been produced to relieve human suffering and to assist sick bodies to regain health. Yet to a great multitude these drugs have become a tragic prison house.

TOBACCO does not have the same threats to society as do the other drugs, but millions whose lives will be cut short are enslaved to tobacco.

SEX is of God's creation. When kept within God's purpose sex is pure and beautiful; prostituted and undisciplined, sex becomes a destructive force and another form of slavery.

It was in a permissive society that Paul made his declaration of independence. The Corinthian church was in a corrupt city, yet Paul challenged:

Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid. . . . Flee fornication. . . . Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your own body (I Corinthians 6:15, 18-20 ASV).

Of himself Paul said: "But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (I Corinthians 9:27 ASV).

2. Another THREAT TO OUR FREEDOM IS FROM "THINGS"—JUST "THINGS."

I believe it was Stephenson who wrote:

The world is full of such a number of things
I am sure we all should be happy as kings.

Yet, human experience and divine revelation tell us that real happiness is not guaranteed by an abundance of things. Across the roadway of life Jesus set up this warning sign for all to see and follow:

Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness:
for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the
things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15 ASV).

Preacher brethren, let us preach this to ourselves. What is our main concern? Is our day ruined when we hear of a bricklayer making more money than we and in half the hours? Let's face it—we, too, are threatened with enslavement to things! The threat is possibly greater to us today than when the church had few full-time preachers, and when most churches felt much less responsibility to support the preacher. We still have courageous men who are making real sacrifices, because of disgraceful irresponsibility on the part of churches; but there is another side of the coin. We, too, can become trapped by what Jesus called the "deceitfulness of riches."¹⁶

There were men in the days of Paul and Peter who preached for "filthy lucre" and were enslaved thereby.¹⁷ One out of

twelve of the apostles sold out. Are we stronger than they? Paul spoke of the "laborer being worthy of his hire" but in the same letter to Timothy he admonished this young preacher:

There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world: but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content (1 Timothy 6:6, 7 RSV).

Does this not apply to us preachers as well as to others?

What about it, brethren, are we offering our services to the highest bidder? Do we send our wife packing while we go to pray over an attractive offer from another church? Is money the number one consideration in a move, even when we are getting along fairly well? "Still as of old, men by themselves are priced; for thirty pieces Judas sold himself, not Christ."

3. PREJUDICE IS A THREAT TO PERSONAL FREEDOM AND GROWTH

There is a form of prejudice that is harmless and permissible, as long as we recognize it for what it is and apply the principles of Romans 14. For example: I know some men who think that their wives are as pretty as mine. That is good. Their prejudice makes us all happier and my wife safer.

There is another kind of prejudice that can put us in bondage. Only truth can make us free; only keeping an "open mind" can keep us free. Prejudice locks tightly the door of our mind and keeps us from a knowledge of the truth. Prejudice against the messenger can turn us against a message—a message that would have been readily accepted if it had only come through a different person. Prejudice distorts our perception, so that we tend to judge a man's loyalty to Christ by

our biases rather than the Bible. Such prejudice is found in young and old alike. For example, last summer a young man boycotted our youth meeting and condemned our youth minister because his hair covered his ears. The critic admittedly did not know just how long a man's hair could be before it became a sin, but his conviction was that any man wanting to be safe should have his hair cut above the ears and off the collar. (If that is what it takes to be safe, Ol' Fowler is doubly safe!) Now, had this young man lived in the days of Campbell, Stone, and Scott he would have no doubt thought our youth minister's hair was in good style. Admittedly, I don't like long hair on men, be it their own or store bought, but I'm not going to say that hair over the ears and touching the collar is Paul's definition of "long hair" on men. It does seem to me that Paul is saying that it is a shame for a man to have hair that makes him look like a woman; but much of our prejudices have to do with customs. When I was a young boy, all the fussing about I Corinthians 11:14 had to do with those worldly women who had the audacity to cut off their hair. But I doubt that many of you under forty-five or fifty ever had the privilege of hearing one of those rousing sermons on "bobbed hair." Within a few years men will be tired of all the fuss and bother of this long hair foolishness and will go back to the "flat-top" style, and that will be nearly as good as mine. Then we can turn our prejudices to something else.

4. BROTHERHOOD PRESSURES AND POLITICS CAN ALSO ENSLAVE US

Elders and other Christians can feel the pressure, but the threat is increasingly strong to the preacher who stands to lose a good salary, his only income, if he goes counter to "main line" brotherhood opinions, or if his conscience on moral issues is offensive to influential members in the local congregation. There were rulers of the synagogues who believed on

Jesus, but pressure from their brethren kept them quiet. They would not confess for fear of being put out of the synagogue.¹⁸

Brotherhood-wide politics are not as threatening where congregations are completely autonomous, but to deny that there are pressures from long standing traditions, influential persons, etc., is a bit naive.

Sometimes we justify our yielding to brotherhood pressures on grounds of "expediency." There is a law of expediency which is good and must be remembered. Expediency is a legitimate type of "situation ethics." Churches have been split, hearts have been broken, and souls have been lost because persons did not follow the principles in I Corinthians 10:23.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.

There are times when we must restrict our personal freedom in Christ out of consideration of a brother's "weak conscience"; or some other circumstance may make it expedient for us to choose a course that we would not normally take. On the other hand "expediency" can be a form of hypocrisy; the "law of expediency" has been used as a cover-up for our fear of brotherhood politics, or community politics which influence the church more than we like to admit. A case in point is the refusal of a church in Alabama to let their black brethren use the baptistry for fear of angry reaction and vandalism from the community. There are times for both blacks and whites to act with restraint and patience—for expediency's sake; but there are also times when the only right thing to do is to act with boldness and courage even though we may suffer for it.

We have come a long, long way in our race relations in the majority of churches, including the one mentioned above, but prejudice still enslaves many on both sides of the color line.

Ours is not the first generation to feel such pressures. Even the apostle Peter succumbed to brotherhood pressure regarding discrimination of Jews against Gentiles, and he was rebuked by Paul. ¹⁹

It was tragic times which produced these poetic lines:

They are slaves who fear to speak
for the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think:
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three. ²⁰

W. E. Sangster once wrote:

Religion, and supremely the religion of Christ, produces the unpurchasable man, and unpurchasable men are the salt of soceity. No social life is long possible unless it has its quorum of men of integrity. Men whom nothing can buy. ²¹

How much our day needs men—courageous men—in the church, in the schools and at all levels of government who stand as free men, who put principle above politics and righteousness above riches.

5. VAIN PRIDE, ENVY AND JEALOUSY ARE THREATS TO HAPPINESS AND FREEDOM IN CHRIST

It is good to take pride in one's work, in one's family and in one's personal appearance. It is not good to become filled with vain pride. Some are so enslaved by their own vanity that they become envious and jealous when they have to take second place to someone else. The person who is filled with jealous pride cannot follow Paul's admonition to "love one another with brotherly affection; **OUTDO ONE ANOTHER IN SHOWING HONOR**" (Romans 12:10 RSV). John the Baptist was free from vain pride. He rejoiced to see that Jesus was increasing while he was decreasing in popularity.²²

How tragic it is for educators, preachers or elders to give years of faithful service in the kingdom of God only to spend their last years in bitterness and resentment because of enslavement to their own pride.

The threats to our personal freedom in Christ are too numerous for one lecture. The threats we have studied may not be the ones to which you would have given priority. You can make your own list; but let us note again these challenging texts:

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery."

"All things are lawful for me . . . but I will not be enslaved by anything."

"**I WILL NOT BE ENSLAVED BY ANYTHING!**" What a stirring and noble resolution! *But how can I attain such a goal?*

HOW CAN I BECOME A FREE MAN IN CHRIST?

Did Paul become free just by making big resolutions? Did he remain free by rejecting all restraints and just doing as he pleased? No, not this.

Freedom is a paradox. G. Studdert-Kennedy, English preacher and poet, put it something like this: "A free man is free only to that extent that he is free to choose his own master." That is what Peter said: "Live as free men, BUT LIVE AS SERVANTS OF GOD!" (I Peter 2:16).

THIS IS HOW SAUL OF TARSUS, A MAN ENSLAVED TO PREJUDICE, ERROR AND MISGUIDED ZEAL—A MAN BOUND BY SIN, BECAME A FREE MAN IN CHRIST.

In spite of his status in an established religion, in spite of pride and ambition, in spite of pressures from colleagues and reverence for traditions, Saul of Tarsus had the courage to listen to the voice of truth and to the voice of a good conscience. With penitent faith he surrendered his proud spirit to become a bondsman of Jesus Christ. In obedience to the Master's command he buried the old man of sin in a baptismal grave, that he should no longer be in bondage to sin, but a servant of righteousness. Having become the bondsman of Jesus Christ he could, for the first time, really know FREEDOM, and he could say, "Now, nothing can master me!"

Are you a slave of sin? The only way to freedom is surrender to a higher Master. Are you among those who once stood as free men in Christ, but have allowed Satan to enslave you again? Adopt these words of George Matheson as a part of your penitent prayer to God.

Make me a captive, Lord
 And then shall I be free;
 Force me to render up my sword,
 And I shall conqueror be.
 I sink in life's alarms
 When by myself I stand;
 Imprison me within thine arms,
 And strong shall be my hand.

My heart is weak and poor
 Until it master find;
 It has no spring of action sure—
 It varies with the wind:
 It cannot freely move
 Till Thou hast wrought its chain;
 Enslave it with Thy matchless love,
 And deathless it shall reign.²³

“If the Son makes you free you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

If you are in bondage to sin, would to God that you yield in total surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. Would that in faith's ear each one of us could hear the chains that bind us—whatever they be—break and fall, rattling at our feet, until we stand in Christ victoriously free!

1 Rice, C. R. and Long, W. S., Jr., *The Spirit of Christ*, (F. L. Rowe Publisher, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1924), p. 3.

2 John 1:17.

3 Matthew 23:23.

4 Allen, James A., quoted by Rice and Long, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

5 Lipscomb, David, *Questions Answered*, Edited by M. C. Kurfees, (Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, Tenn., 1921).

6 Fletcher, Joseph, *Situation Ethics*, (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1966), p. 22.

7 Fletcher, Joseph, see quotation in *Let Me Sound My Trumpet*, by Eugene Lawton, (Lawton Publications, Newark, N.J., 1975), p. 143.

8 Barclay, William, *Ethics In A Permissive Society*, (Harper & Row, N.Y., 1971), chapter 4. 9 Joshua, chapter 2.

10 Matthew 12:7.

11 Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

12 Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

13 Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

14 Beecher, Henry Ward, *20 Centuries of Great Preaching*, Vol. IV, (Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1971), p. 317. (Emphasis mine.)

15 Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

16 Matthew 13:22.

17 Titus 1:11; 1 Peter 5:2.

18 John 12:42, 43.

19 Galatians 2:11-13.

20 Lowell, James Russell, 1819-1891, *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, Edited by James Morrison, (Harper & Brothers, N.Y., 1948), p. 356.

21 Sangster, W. E., quoted by *Pulpit Digest*, (P.O. Box 5199, Jackson, Miss., 39204. September-October 1975), p. 31.

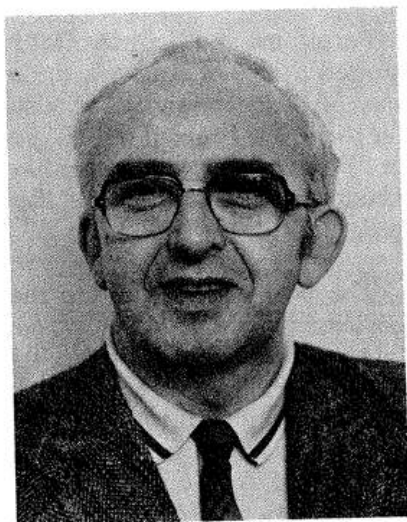
22 John 3:29.

23 Matheson, George, 1842-1906, *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, edited by James Dalton Morrison, (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1948), p. 242.

THE TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE

ANDREW GARDINER

Andrew Gardiner, born May 4, 1923, in Stirlingshire, Scotland. Baptized March 3, 1935, in Glasgow. Began preaching in March, 1940. Continued self-support until 1946 as mechanical engineer. Spent 5 months during 46-47 in training with Walter Crosswaite, veteran British preacher.



No formal academic qualifications. Studied by correspondence through London Bible College, and also in extramural departments of Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities. From 1946 to 1957 did general evangelistic work in Great Britain, including a period of about 3 years in Peterhead. From 1957 to 1965 served Hyvots Bank church in Edinburgh as local evangelist. In 1965 helped establish the church at Sighthill in Edinburgh and still serves as local evangelist. Has continuously been supported since January, 1953, by the Edgefield church in Dallas, Texas. Has encouraged and helped in the training of several young Gospel preachers in Scotland.

Has spoken on lectureships in England, Ireland, Belgium, Germany, and the United States. Conducts about four Gospel meetings per year. Last year preached in Desboro, England, campaign.

Family have been members of church in Scotland since March, 1960. In 1950 married Christina Moyes from Kirkcaldy congregation. Two children, Alvin McGibbon Gardiner and Melanie Ruth Gardiner, both of whom together with Alvin's wife Ruth, are faithful members of the Sighthill church. Alvin works as an Executive Officer in British Civil Service, and also does some preaching in Scotland.

Permit me as a Scot to offer my congratulations to, first the United States of America upon reaching the 200th Anniversary of Independence, and also to Abilene Christian College for the whole concept of this great lectureship upon the theme of "Freedom." I would also like to thank the members of the Lectureship Committee for the invitation to take part in this program.

The people who came to these shores possessed and were possessed of high ideals of freedom. Political freedom was important to them. However, the motivation to emigrate to the "New World" was frequently the search for a deeper freedom than that gained through politics. They wanted to follow what they believed to be the Truth. They believed that liberty consists of freedom from compulsion and hindrance, and opportunity to act without interference. This concept caught fire in many hearts.

However, even this came to be abused. Freedom led to prosperity and so developed the materialistic society with its homage to "man made images." Truth was made subject to the struggle for gain. Man's soul became anchored to the latest car, or coloured television set. Thus instead of a free man having possessions, man came into bondage again and was possessed by the "things" his hands had made. Even in the realm of morality, profitability became more important than truth.

In more recent years we have had the reaction. Experience is believed to be the basis of reality. This means that a man's own experiences possess him. There is no concept of ultimate truth. Man's soul is left without an anchor. Moral standards in society are undermined. This does not lead to freedom but to bondage to desire, passion, violence, drugs or whatever the passing whim or fad may be. One is free, not when he can do just what he wants, but when he wants to do, and can do what he ought. Man gains his freedom when released from all that is earthbound. Have you ever seen the faces of a crew of a ship when they have tied up in harbour after having sailed through fog? Until that moment all is apprehension, concern, and even fear of death. However, the moment the ship is moored to that which is secure they all relax and are ready even to go to sleep.

In John 8:32 Jesus says that Truth is the anchor which gives freedom spiritually. Please read John 8:12-55.

I. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY TRUTH?

In John 18:38 we are told that Pilate asked Jesus, "What is Truth?" This is an age old question. It has been asked all through history and is still on the lips of many people today.

A. THE MEANING OF THE WORD is easy to find. In the Oxford Concise Dictionary the definition is "Quality, state, of being true or accurate or honest or sincere or loyal, or accurately shaped or adjusted." For a thing to be true it must be in accordance with fact or reality. It must not be false or erroneous.

As used in the Scriptures it refers to that which is trustworthy or genuine, as opposed to the things that are illusory or variable. It is used to refer to the essential nature of God or of Divine reality.

In the Old Testament two words are used. They both carry the thought of that which is firm, solid, valid, and binding. They suggest the ideas of constancy, steadfastness, and faithfulness. They are applied to such things as Civil Justice, speech which is in agreement with the facts, the knowledge of the wise, one of the attributes of the Divine nature and operations, and God's revealed Will. They indicate that these are faithful and trustworthy. That which is "Truth" may be relied upon all along the line without question. It is always active and leads not so much to wisdom as to moral integrity and obedience.

In the New Testament the word carries over many of these connotations. But there is also added to these thoughts the thought of reality. The thought of truth is used in opposition to falsehood. It means that which is ultimately true or real. It is used of the revelation of the Divine reality to man. In John 1:17 we read "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This is in contrast to the devil of whom Jesus said he "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." It is also used in the New Testament to refer to a body of doctrine or teaching which is thus described as being true and also looked upon as the message which conveys the Truth that man needs for salvation and fellowship with God (2 John 4).

B. ASPECTS OF TRUTH

In the thinking of men it is customary to distinguish between different aspects of what man considers to be "Truth!" For example, we use the term to refer to:—

1. *The idea of the ultimate reality.* Here we are searching for an accurate and adequate idea of what existence really is. Possibly this was what Pilate had in mind when he questioned

Jesus. It is a reference to that reality on which our subjective impressions rely for their validity. It is the basis of all true knowledge. In Scripture there is another aspect of this. This is a subjective idea, conveyed by revelation that constitutes Truth to be objectively accepted. This is seen at work in the men who spoke by inspiration of God (2 Peter 1:21).

2. *The concepts deduced by reasoning.* Here there is an arrangement of ideas with reference to one focal point. In this area Truth demands that the ideas correspond to the facts. This calls for the exercise of the logical faculties of men. It is man's attempt to bring all known facts into a rational scheme of thought.

3. *Truth in the personal moral sense.* This is closely akin to sincerity. It demands that our expression correspond with our inner thoughts. This aspect of Truth is important in the religious sphere. It is one thing to be able to quote much Bible and make many arguments for the evidences of Christianity. It is an altogether different thing to authenticate the Truth of the Gospel in our lives. When we see an advertisement on television for Coca Cola, it makes no difference if those who advertise it never drink the stuff. However, the first question that arises in the minds of people when challenged by us with the Truth of the Gospel is—does this man really believe what he is saying? What has this "Truth" done for his life? The moral impact of this aspect of truth is only tremendous. Just try to prepare a sermon on Matthew 5:28 after having spent a lot of time among attractive mini-skirted girls, or even after having watched certain types of television shows. It is at this point we need a clear conception of what Truth is. I am convinced that we are dealing here with the real problem behind the drop-outs in the Church, whether of preachers, or members. The pertinent question really is, "Do we so live by

the Truth of God that it takes possession of us and exercises control over every aspect of our lives?"

4. Religious Truth. Modernism has given rise to a concept which is frequently talked about in religious circles. It is that something can be true religiously while not being in keeping with fact in other disciplines. This is certainly not a Biblical concept. As we have seen, the idea of Truth in Scripture is of that which is firm, solid, and valid. It carries with it the concepts of steadfastness and faithfulness. In other words, that which is true—is true! It is important for us to realize that He who in the Bible is declared as Truth is also the Creator of the universe and the Lord of all history. There are many problems and difficulties in this area, but we do not solve these by setting up a double standard of Truth.

When Jesus declared "The Truth will make you free," He placed the highest premium on reality, integrity, faithfulness, and sincerity. He means that without these qualities there can be no freedom.

This brings us to the question:—

II. WHERE IS TRUTH TO BE FOUND?

We now turn from the broader considerations of "Truth" to think particularly of the Truth to which Jesus was referring.

In the context of John 8:32, and in the fourth Gospel generally, the discussion of TRUTH is centered on those things which come from the Father, which are personalized in Christ Himself and which are mediated to us today by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. It is important that we keep this in mind when thinking of the Truth that makes free. What this means is that certain facts, principles, truths and

standards are revealed to us with the authority of Heaven. This means that religion is not the desperate search of the soul of man, reaching up to find communion with God, but the loving revelation of God Himself to men in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus it is God who makes the first move. Furthermore, the fulness of the truth of God is made known to man in Christ (Colossians 2:8-10). He is therefore not just the revealer, He is also the revelation.

A. GOD IS THE SOURCE OF TRUTH

In John 8:26-27 Jesus is recorded as having said "I have many things to say and to judge of you: but He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him. They understood not that He spake to them of the Father."

In these words Jesus brings us face to face with the great reality. He also makes it clear that the Father's testimony is absolutely trustworthy. This is not some kind of mystical speculation or dreaming. Jesus has a message from the Father, and the Father is True. Whatever He teaches then is rooted in the reality of the Father and comes to us with the assurance that it is not a distorted message. "He that sent Me is True."

This excludes all other forms of deity. In John 17:3 we read that Jesus said in the prayer for the disciples "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." The truth of the Gospel is quite exclusive in its presentation of the Deity. This is, of course, rooted in the revelation of the Old Covenant Scriptures. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This is a passage which in its context contrasts the Lord of Israel with the idolatry of the Canaanite nations into whose land Israel is about to march. It indicates

the unity of God. It is on this basis that God declares His jealousy over Israel (Exodus 20:4-6). He is the one and only true reality, and He will allow no rivals whatsoever. He is true!

Because of this He demands first place in man's life. In pronouncing on the greatest commandment in the law, He declared "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." This is not just an arbitrary demand of God. Since it arises from the declaration of His Unity (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), it means that man's attention in the search for reality is turned away from earth-bound things to be riveted to the great reality which is the ultimate Truth. God is One and only One, therefore, He must be first. Given this perspective, man's search for meaning and reality begins to find the true datum line of all existence.

God is,
God is true, and
God will be first in man's thinking.

Now from this it follows that God's declarations about Himself are true. Furthermore, these declarations are the source of sanctification for man. It is only as man realizes the Unity and Holiness of God that he become conscious of his sinfulness and desires to make right the relationship which has been marred by sin. This was Isaiah's experience in the temple (Isaiah 6). But how can this Truth be conveyed to man? At this point we think of Jesus Christ.

B. I AM . . . THE TRUTH . . . (John 14:6)

This is an astonishing claim for any man to make. Jesus made it. It is either true or false!

The acceptance of this proposition means to begin with that the testimony of Jesus on any matter is accepted as Truth. This is made clear in John 8:14-16:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgement is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me.

Here Jesus claims that His testimony is true, because the Father—the source of all truth is with Him.

However, the statement in John 14:6 means more than that Jesus told the truth. He says "I AM . . . THE TRUTH." This means that He is Himself the perfect embodiment of the Divine reality. He is the Word made flesh (John 1:14). In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Deity RSV) bodily (Colossians 2:9). When we look at Jesus as He lives, and speaks and acts, we can say that we have seen the Father (John 14:9). He is not only the One who speaks the Word of God—as were the prophets of old, but He is the living Word—the incarnate Word.

But still the statement of John 14:6 goes further. Jesus goes on to say "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." This again is a tremendous claim. It means that it is only in and through Jesus Christ that we can truly come to know God and enter into that loving relationship with Him. There is no other way. Now this settles all the claims of the great teachers and speculators. You can seek for the final reality about the universe and yourself wherever you like, but at the end of the day you must come back to Jesus Christ because He could say I AM . . . THE TRUTH.

Now it is evident that at the time of His death and resurrection His disciples had a great deal more to learn. So it was that He made a promise to them.

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT

Many things are said about the Holy Spirit by Jesus and by the apostles. However, for the moment we must restrict ourselves to a consideration of His relationship to TRUTH.

To begin with we notice that He is called the "Spirit of Truth." In John 14:15-18 we read:

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

In this passage Jesus promises to come to them again in the person of that other Comforter whom He calls the Spirit of Truth. Since He bears this name it is surely needless to point out that what was true of Jesus must also be true of Him in that His testimony is true.

Moreover, we find that His purpose in coming is to testify of Jesus—the Truth (John 15:26).

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me, and ye shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

Again we read in John 16:14-15:

He shall glorify Me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

It, therefore, becomes obvious that the work of the Spirit of Truth was not to set Himself forth. His coming was that He might glorify Christ—the Truth, and that He might set forth the things that concern Christ—the Truth. It seems to me that a great deal of controversy about the Holy Spirit might have been spared if this truth had been grasped. In recent years there has been much emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Fine! But let us not overlook the fact that the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ who is the perfect embodiment of the Truth.

Now just at this point we take another look at what the Spirit was to do. In John 14:26 we read:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

An important aspect of the work of the Spirit then was to remind the apostles of what Jesus had taught—the Truth. He was also to teach them all things—the Truth. Later we read that Jesus said (John 16:12-13)—

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

It becomes evident that communication of the unfolding future would be a part of the work of the Spirit, and so also would be the completion of the revelation of Truth.

At this point it is worth noting that there is a slight shift in the concept of Truth. Whereas until now it has had mainly a personal point of reference, we now begin to find it being used of a body of teaching which embraces the reality to be found in Jesus Christ. In this connection it is often used in the same way as the concept of "The Faith." Another parallel concept deserves our further consideration at this time. This is—

D. THE WORD OF TRUTH

In referring to the words of God we find Jesus forced to confess "Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17). Whatever Jesus meant by "Thy Word" is therefore designated as "Truth." In this connection it is important that we realize that Jesus had an attitude to the Old Covenant scriptures which simply meant that He regarded them as the truth of God. In His own personal life He placed great reliance upon them. When seeking to explain or authenticate some point of teaching He treats them as authoritative. In many of His controversies He regards them as the final court of appeal. Here is One for whom the entire scriptures of the Old Testament are considered to be God's Word and therefore God's Truth.

This same quality passed over into the teaching of John the Baptist. In John 5:33 we read, "Ye sent unto John, and He bare witness unto the truth." It is also seen in the statements made by Jesus. In John 8:45-47 we have,

. . . and because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

Then comes the fearful judgement "He that is of God, heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Thus the rejection of His Message is an indication of their rejection of God. Now this is important as we move into the time that follows the death and resurrection of Jesus. In John 13:20 Jesus is reported as having said to the apostles, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." In these words Jesus affords to the apostles the authentication that the Father had given to Him. When this is taken in conjunction with the promise to them of the Spirit of Truth, it means that their teachings are given the same status as the Old Testament writings and the very words of Jesus—their teachings are Truth.

Now in the New Testament Scriptures we have the written record of the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42). These writings contain that body of teaching to which we have earlier referred, and which is described as—"The Faith," "The Truth," or "The Word of Truth." These then have also come to be accepted as the "Word of Truth," and as filling out and completing that which had only partially been unfolded in earlier times. It is evident then that for the Christian today the body of doctrine known as "The Truth," revealed by the Spirit, mediated by Christ, as having come down from the Father in heaven is to be found in, and only in, the Scriptures of the Old and New Covenants.

To this as a basic position of faith, we as members of Churches of Christ must be fully committed. The only reason for our separate existence as a body of people is to plead for a complete return to Christianity as it was in the beginning. This plea is totally invalid if the Old and New Testament Scriptures are not recognized as the Truth, the Whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth!

The Truth that makes us free today is the truth of the Bible! This stands out in contrast to the error that surrounds us in the modern religious world. At this point we cannot afford to be shackled by any human opinion, whether coming from denominational creeds, human speculations or even from the "Voices of the Pioneers," however much we may admire them. The freedom of our souls, and the validity of our message depend entirely on our complete dedication to the TRUTH set forth in Scripture.

III. WHAT CAN TRUTH DO?

"The truth shall make you free"—It is important for us to grasp the fact that the things Jesus proclaimed are not only revealed Truth, but they are also the Truth that saves, that liberates. Jesus said (John 5:24)—

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life.

This truth gives the soul true access to God (John 1:17). "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and faith came by Jesus Christ." Speaking of the worship of God, Jesus said (John 4:24), "God is Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth".

It is abiding in the truth that makes for genuine discipleship. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

This body of teaching then—**THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE**

A. FROM DARKNESS.

In John 8:12 we read:

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

Darkness in the scriptures is used as a symbol to represent error, evil, ignorance. In contrast, Christ is the Light—truth, goodness and knowledge. He who follows Christ shall have the light of life. In Ephesians 5, the apostle Paul draws out the contrast between light and darkness. The darkness is identified with the characteristics of the life of Jesus. Therefore, obeying the TRUTH makes men free from the deep-seated and base desires which dominate their lives, and brings them into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The Truth makes free from darkness.

B. FROM SIN.

Life lived in obedience to these base desires leads to bondage to sin. Jesus said (John 8:34-36):

Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

The guilt of sin is a bondage in which all men are held (Rom. 3:23). Now freedom from that sin can only be obtained in Christ. This freedom is made available to us in our obedience to the TRUTH, or to the form of doctrine which was delivered to us (Rom. 6:16-18):

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were of servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Freedom from sin then comes from obedience to the Truth and such obedience makes one a servant of righteousness or TRUTH. But being made free from sin, he who walks in the truth is also made free. . . .

C. FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH.

In John 8:51 we read "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

Here is a tremendous claim that Jesus makes. Walking in Truth gives immunity from death. This is in keeping with other things Jesus said. In John 11:25-26 we read that He said to Martha, the sister of Lazarus:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Earlier Jesus had given assurance in John 5:28-29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation!

There is no doubt, therefore, that death will be conquered and the grave overcome. The only question that arises will

be—"To what will I be raised?" This is where the TRUTH enters. He who walks in TRUTH shall be raised to the life everlasting.

The matter rests here. The Word of Truth is the incorruptible and Eternal seed which cannot be destroyed. In 1 Peter 1:22-25 we read:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.

This is the Word of Truth—

AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE—

Now the final matter to be considered is this: What is going to be our attitude to this TRUTH? We can refuse the Truth in an intellectual sense. In I John 4:6 John writes, "we are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." To refuse the word of the apostles is to refuse the truth in an intellectual sense. It is also possible for there to be an absence of truth in a moral sense. In 2 Thessalonians 2:12 Paul speaks of some who did not receive the love of the Truth. Even in the case of man's original fall from the knowledge of God it was this refusal to receive the love of the truth that caused them to suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18-23). This is the root of all evil

according to Paul's writing here. It is also possible to turn away from the truth in a very practical sense. In John 1:8 we are told that the one who denies being a sinner is a liar and the truth is not in him. A little later the same writer in 2:4 says "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and, the truth is not in him."

It is therefore most important that we search our own hearts to determine whether we truly love the TRUTH! How do we handle it? Do we suppress it or handle it deceitfully? Do we acknowledge our own sinfulness, and go on to live a life of obedience to Him?

To gain a knowledge of the truth we must maintain a truly open mind like the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:30-34). This is not to say we must believe all we hear. It is, however, to be determined to know God's will in all things (John 7:16-17). It is to be willing at all costs to do the TRUTH (John 3:21). In other words, it is to pray for ourselves like Jesus prayed for the disciples.

SANCTIFY ME IN THY TRUTH, THY WORD IS TRUTH.

May I appeal to all who read these words to make this the constant prayer of their lives. If we do—then we can rest assured "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

LAW AND LIBERTY

E. R. BRANNAN

E. R. Brannan was born in Norwood, Ohio, on September 6, 1928. He is married to the former Merle Moore and they have four children—Steve, Deborah (Mrs. Patric Watkins), Rebecca (Mrs. Paul Labriola), and Julie.



Brother Brannan graduated from high school at the Montgomery Bible College and received the Junior College Diploma from the Montgomery Bible College. He received the B.A. degree from Huntingdon College and the M.S. and Ed.D. degrees from Auburn University. An additional year of graduate work in Bible was completed at the Harding School of Bible and Religion. Brother Brannan preached for College Church of Christ for 17 years. He has been preaching for the last 32 years.

Brother Brannan joined the faculty of Alabama Christian College in February, 1949. He has taught in both the high school and college departments. He has served as guidance counselor, principal, assistant to the President, Dean of the College, (1955-69), and Academic Vice-President (1970-73). He was made President on January 12, 1973.

A member of Phi Beta Kappa. Listed in "Who's Who In America." Past President of the Alabama Junior College Association.

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).

“For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion of the flesh” (Galatians 5:13).

The subject is not “Law versus Liberty” because there is no inherent conflict between the two. Neither is the subject “Law or Liberty.” Both are necessary in their respective spheres. From one standpoint it may be said that law sets boundaries within which liberty must operate. From another, liberty may be said to operate in areas not regulated by law.

These two points may be illustrated by Mark’s simple statement of the Great Commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). Law demands that we go into all the world and that we preach the gospel. Man is at liberty to determine how he will go (automobile, airplane, boat, etc.). He also is at liberty to determine how he will preach (public, private, radio, television, etc.)

GOD HAS ALWAYS ESTABLISHED LAW

The manner in which God governs rational creatures is by a law. At their creation, he has placed all intelligent beings under a system of law. He gave a law to angels which some have kept and have continued in their state of righteousness. Others disobeyed God’s law and plunged themselves into a state of destruction and misery. “For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . . ” (II Peter 2:4). Similarly, he gave a law to Adam who stood as representative of the whole human race (Romans 5:12). Our

first parents violated the law God gave them and plunged the whole world into sin and sorrow.

The term "law" is most commonly used in the scriptures to refer to a definite commandment laid down by any recognized authority. It is a rule of action. The Hebrew word for law, *Torah*, lays more stress on its moral authority, as teaching the truth and guiding in the right way. Instruction, guidance, and direction are good synonyms. The Greek word for law, *Nomos*, lays stress on its constraining power, as imposed and enforced by a recognized authority. In either case, law is a commandment proceeding from without and is distinguished from the free action of its subjects, although not necessarily opposed thereto.

The inability of man to direct his steps necessitates a law. The prophet wrote, "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Solomon warned, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Since God created man, he has the right to impose law upon him. Being infinite both in his knowledge of man and his love for man, God has given laws that are for man's best interest and long-range good. When we recognize this fact, we will say with John, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). God is not a tyrant who delights in restraining man by law. God gives man all the freedom he can wisely use.

A study of Paul's use of *Nomos* (law) in the book of Romans is a rich study. *Nomos* is found about two hundred times in the New Testament, and seventy-seven of the occurrences are found in Romans. Paul in Romans uses *nomos* forty-one times

without the article (the), thirty-five times with the article, and one time with "that." He refers to the law of works (3:27), law of faith (3:27), law of the husband (7:2), law of God (7:22), law of my mind (7:23), law of sin (7:22), law of the Spirit (8:2), law of sin and death (8:2), and law of righteousness (9:31).

Paul usually refers to the Law of Moses when he uses *Nomos* with the article; however, this is not always the case. In several places, he makes reference to the Law of Moses when he uses *Nomos* without the article. When this is true, Paul is emphasizing its quality as law and not the fact that Moses is the author. Frequently, *Nomos* is used to refer to law in general and not to any particular law, as the Law of Moses. In such cases *Nomos* is used without the article. Paul in a few places uses *Nomos* in a metaphorical sense to refer to a constituted order of things or a system (See Romans 3:27). One time *Nomos* is used to refer to all the Old Testament scriptures (Romans 3:19).

CHRISTIANS ARE FREE FROM SOME LAWS

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). The man of the world is under the cruel bondage of sin. Death has dominion over him. He presents his members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness. The Christian has died to sin through repentance, and being buried with Christ in baptism, he is raised to walk in newness of life. He is dead unto sins, and death has no more dominion over him. He is now a servant of righteousness. Satan has been dethroned and sin expelled from his life. See the sixth chapter of Romans.

We are also free from the requirements of the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses is good and served the purposes God intended. First, it was designed to reveal sin to man. Paul

said, "Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). Second, it was designed to convict man of sin. "Sin is not imputed where there is no law" (Romans 4:13).

The Law of Moses showed that man could not live up to the measure of a law of works. God used the two streams of the human race to show man his need for grace. The gentiles had no law but the law of nature and conscience. The result was that God gave them up to unholy desires and passions (Romans 1:24, 26). The verdict of God is "That they that practice such things are worthy of death" (Romans 1:32). The Jews, on the other hand, as God's chosen people were given a law by God which if kept perfectly would earn eternal life. But the Jews failed miserably in their efforts to keep the law. Its demands were too stringent. Paul reminded the Jews, "For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the law: but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision" (Romans 2:25). Stephen said to the Jews, "Ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not" (Acts 7:53).

God thus showed through the gentiles that man left to himself cannot develop a law that will enable him to live righteously, and he showed through the Jews that man is incapable of living up to the demands of a law of works given even by God. The weakness of the Law of Moses was not that its precepts are not good. Paul wrote, "So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good" (Romans 7:12). Its imperfection was that while the Law could reveal and impute sin, it could not forgive sin. "For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else

would they not have ceased to be offered?" (Hebrews 10:1, 2). Viewing the failures of both Jews and gentiles, Paul said, "They are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:9, 10).

The Law served the function of a tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24). Having established the points that man cannot obtain righteousness either by his own devised way or by a law of works given by God, Paul pointed out there is a way for man to be righteous. It is a righteousness imputed by God to those who have faith in Christ and will accept the grace that his death provided (Romans 3:21-25). The law, by revealing sin and showing man's inability to merit his salvation by perfectly keeping all the commandments of God, prepared man to accept Christ and the grace he brought.

The Christian is free from any law that demands perfect obedience as the means for salvation. "For by grace have you been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

CHRISTIANS ARE UNDER LAW

Some maintain that Christ has freed us from all law and imposed restraint. Such is not true. Paul in Romans 8:2 shows that we are freed from the law of sin and death by obedience to the higher law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." Again, in Romans 7 making the analogy of the woman bound by the law of the husband while he lives but free to be bound by the law of another when he dies, Paul said, "Wherefore my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead" (verse 4).

How thankful we should be that God has given us knowledge of his will. God has spoken unto us through his Son (Hebrews 1:2). Man is by nature a worshipful being. He is born with an inferiority complex that makes him reach out for someone more powerful, knowing, and enduring than he. While the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork, they tell little of the nature and will of God. Man in his ignorance has groped blindly, seeking to placate the wrath of an angry God.

When I was a boy in the eighth grade, a documentary film was shown to the student assembly that made a lasting impression on me. The film company went to a remote village in India to film a religious ritual that was repeated annually. The mothers of male infants less than a year old had washed their babies and dressed them in their finest clothes and held them for the inspection of the village council. After much examination and deliberation, the council selected the baby they regarded as the finest in the village. The great pleasure of the mother radiated from her happy face; her child had been selected!

The same point is made in Romans 6:16-18. Paul had shown that God's grace abounded when sin abounded. Anticipating that some might say, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound," he said, "God forbid." We have died to the old man of sin, we have reversed our allegiance, we have changed masters. "But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (Verses 17, 18). The Christian lives under a law of grace made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus.

The following day the baby was dressed in a ceremonial gown and the whole village climbed to the top of a nearby

mountain. They stopped before the opening of a cave. Some began beating on drums and shaking cymbals, and the priestess of the tribe began to dance. The camera was focused on the opening of the cave; an object began to move slowly out of the darkness, aroused by the music and movement. It was a huge King Cobra! The priestess danced in front of the snake, urging it to strike at her. The narrator explained that the snake had to strike at her and she had to kiss it on the hood three times before the ritual was complete. Finally, this was accomplished. Then the council brought the baby, selected as the finest in the village, and laid it before the snake as a sacrifice. The happy people returned to their village secure in the feeling that they would have good crops and be free from pestilence for another year. After all, they had given their god their best. This exemplifies the action of men who know not that or what "God has spoken."

In 1966 Joseph Fletcher wrote a book called *Situation Ethics* which was followed by another, *Moral Responsibility*. Professor Fletcher maintained that there is nothing universally right or universally wrong; that there is nothing intrinsically good or intrinsically bad. There is no way prior to the situation to define an action as good or bad. The only thing that is universally good is love. Any action that is an operation of love is moral and good, and any action not motivated by love is immoral and evil.

I think all of us would agree that action must be prompted by love to be right and moral. Paul shows the necessity of this in I Corinthians 13: 1-2. I affirm that the commands of God represent the action of love. God's infinite knowledge opens to him all the possibilities and ramifications of human action. Based on this knowledge, he has given us rules of right conduct which represent the action of love.

Professor Fletcher's illustrations to support his theory are drawn from the unusual and extraordinary. We will rarely, if ever, be faced with situations such as he describes. Situation ethics place a ponderous burden of freedom upon man, too much, in fact. If man were perfect in his love, he could be rightly guided by the decision of his conscience. Unfortunately, the Lord is the only one who reached that state of perfection on earth. The passions of man often take priority over the wisdom of love.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

No liberty is absolute. Unbounded liberty becomes license. Peter wrote of those who promise liberty "while they themselves are bond servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage" (II Peter 2:19). Man is so constituted that he will serve someone or something. His liberty is to, as Joshua expressed it, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

Liberty operates within the boundaries set by law. James speaks of the perfect law as being a law of liberty. "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25). "So speak ye, and do so, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty" (James 2:12). God's law provides the rule of right living by which liberty is attained. When man's heart is filled with the knowledge and love of the law of God, he will by the free impulse of the soul do what the will of God requires. Truly, free is the man who can say as did Jesus, "I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 5:30).

Liberty also operates in areas not regulated by law. We must be careful not to legislate where God has not legislated. It is just as wrong to bind where God has loosed as it is to loose where God has bound. We must neither add to nor subtract from the law of God. Our brotherhood has been splintered by those who have bound where God has not bound. A case in point is division caused by those who would legislate on how to provide for orphans. All agree that orphans must be provided for, but no specific pattern is given as the means. Think how much stronger the church would be today if men had not invaded the realm of liberty with their own laws.

Liberty may be restricted by expediency. Paul wrote, "All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any" (I Corinthians 6:12). Expediency refers to what is wise or proper under a given set of circumstances. One may voluntarily restrict his freedom in order not to close a door of opportunity or to reduce his influence for good in a given situation. A number of years ago, my family was with me for a mission meeting in the mountains of northeast Kentucky. There was a strong Mennonite influence in the community. One of the sisters told my wife that some were offended by her wearing lipstick. For the remainder of the time, she did not wear lipstick. She restricted her liberty for the sake of expediency.

Paul fought the Judaizing teachers when they tried to bind circumcision on the gentiles. He refused to have Titus circumcised. An important principle was involved (Galatians 2:1-5). Yet, a short time after this, he had Timothy circumcised before he took him on his journey because of the Jews in the area where they would travel (Acts 16:3). This is an example of Paul's becoming "all things to all men, that I may by all

means save some" (I Corinthians 6:22). Please note that this flexibility prevails only in the area of liberty, not law.

Our liberty may also be restricted by the conscience of a weak brother. Many in the Corinthian church were converts from the heathen religion. Sacrifices abounded in the worship rites. The thrifty minded worshippers made good usage of the roasted sacrificial meat. Sometimes it was sold at reduced price in the market place. Quite often great feasts were held to utilize the meat. A Christian might be invited to a feast at the house of a pagan. Paul instructed the Christian to go if he desired, eating what was set before him without question.

"But if any man say unto you, this has been offered in sacrifice, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake; Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other . . ." (I Corinthians 10:28, 29). There is only one God and no idol is anything. Yet, all are not mature in this knowledge. A weak brother encouraged to eat the sacrificed meat by the example of a strong brother might slip back into his old practice of idolatry. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to the weak . . . For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died" (I Corinthians 8:9, 11).

This point can be misapplied. Some have said, "What you are doing offends me." By this they do not mean that they are tempted to do what you are doing. This is the situation to which Paul refers. The weak following the strong falls into a pitfall. Romans 14:1 teaches us not to allow the scruples of a weak brother to infringe upon the liberty of others. I heard of one place where a brother objected to the individual communion cups because the Lord said "cup." To satisfy him they got two large containers. He objected to two because the Lord took a "cup." They discarded one, and he still objected

because they had a "glass" not a "cup." They exchanged this for a large cup, and he could not decide if the Lord's cup had a handle on it!

LAW AND LIBERTY AND UNITY

The subject of law and liberty holds powerful implications for unity. One of the most familiar slogans of the Restoration movement is, "In matters of faith, unity. In matters of opinion, liberty. In all matters, charity." The unity of the church has often been broken by those who minimize matters of faith and turn from the pattern of sound words. The solidarity of the church has also been shaken by those who have pressed opinion to the invasion of Christian liberty. Both are wrong. Sometimes the truth is spoken, but not in love. This, too, violates God's will (Ephesians 4:15).

We have historically divided matters into two areas, faith and opinion. Faith relates to areas where God has spoken. Here there must be unity. Fellowship is involved. Opinion relates to areas not covered by God's word. *We have the right to be divided in our opinions, but we have no right to divide over opinion.*

For a number of years, I have wondered if we do not need a third area if we are to preserve the basic unity of the church. For the want of better designation, I have termed this area *Private Conviction*. It is an area covered by scriptures which are not altogether clear. Righteous and scholarly men divide over the meaning. It is an area of individual action, as opposed to congregational action. A man would be forced by conscience to speak his belief, but he would respect the belief of his brother who differs. He will be careful not to make a hobby of the subject or to press it to divide the church. Two brothers holding opposite views could worship and work side by side. It would not be made a test of fellowship.

Paul in Romans 14 sets forth two examples. One is the case of a brother who regards special days as opposed to the brother that regards all days alike. The other is the case of the brother who is a vegetarian as opposed to the brother who can eat both meats and vegetables. Can these brethren worship together and fellowship each other? Paul says they can and gives two rules: (1) "Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth" (Romans 14:3), (2) "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind" (Romans 14:5).

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

God in consideration of man's needs have given him divine law. The distinctive mark of man as opposed to any other earthly being is his freedom to choose. The ultimate goal is to make God's demands our desires. Many times I have called brother Gus Nichols and asked how he was doing. His inevitable reply was, "I am doing as I please. I please to do right, so I can do as I please." God give us this maturity!

THE RESPONSIBILITY FREEDOM BRINGS

STEPHAN BILAK

Epi Stephan Bilak was born in Kosmyryn, Ukraine, May 13, 1926. He was educated in the Ukraine, Germany, France and the United States, receiving his B.A. degree from David Lipscomb College in 1957. He was baptized by J. Kudenczuk October 1, 1946, while still in D.P. camp in Germany. He was married in 1954 to the former Reba Denny of Baxter, Tennessee, and they now live in Chesaux, Switzerland (near Lausanne). They have four children: Rebecca, 18, a student at Abilene Christian College; Stephanie, 17; Paul, 15; and James, 13½.



Stephan filled monthly engagements in churches in Tennessee while a student at Lipscomb, then worked with churches in Montreal, Canada, and Plattsburg, New York, before coming deeply involved in radio broadcasts beamed into the Soviet Union. He also taught at Michigan Christian College during its formative years.

At the present time Stephan has four 15-minute programs per week from three different radio stations: Monte Carlo, Monaco; Bonaire in the West Indies; and Lisbon, Portugal—thus covering the entire Soviet Union, its satellites and Western Europe. This work is under the oversight of the Minter Lane Church of Christ in Abilene,

Texas. In the absence of a missionary, he has preached the last three years for the French congregation of the Lord's people meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Brother Bilak has written two tracts in the Ukrainian language: "What is the Church of Christ?" and "What Must I do to be Saved?" He publishes periodically "The 20th Century Christian" in Ukrainian and edits "The Ukrainian Messenger," a periodical in English published by the Minter Lane Church with the purpose of bringing the readers closer to the Great Commission in action behind the Iron Curtain.

FREEDOM! Man's favorite theme of all ages, but never before has there been as much talk about freedom as there is now and with countless interpretations of the meaning of the word **FREEDOM**.

Turn on your radio and you will hear **FREEDOM!** Total freedom now! Turn on your TV set and you will hear, and quite often even see, freedom. Take any newspaper or any periodical, secular or religious, in any language and you will find out that all kinds of freedoms are being described and offered. Listen to the politicians of any country; they also speak of freedom. Listen to the poets and they recite, **FREEDOM!** Talk with the theologians and they will present to you the doctrine of liberation, that is, the theology of freedom. In all these champions of freedom we hear very little about the responsibility that freedom brings. Freedom without responsibility is the most dangerous philosophy, or theology, in the world.

Now, take the Bible and read it from the beginning to the end, and you will find out that the Scriptures speak about freedom which is always coupled with responsibility. Freedom

is like man—"Now the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). So it is with freedom. It is not good that it should be alone. It must have a help-meet, responsibility.

Freedom and responsibility are the key words to understanding the teachings of Jesus Christ. The conception of Christianity without freedom and responsibility is impossible and meaningless.

What are some of the responsibilities of every man and woman? Every man and woman has the responsibility to be free, to remain free, and as free and new creatures serve their liberator, the Lord Jesus Christ. This thought is expressed by Nicholai Berdyaev,

God has laid upon man the duty (responsibility ESB) of being free, of safeguarding freedom of spirit, no matter how difficult that may be, or how much sacrifice and suffering it may require.¹

The Bible tells us that God created man and woman and gave them freedom and responsibility.

God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them." Genesis 1:27. "God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Genesis 2:15-17 ASV.

The man and woman were to be free and safeguard their freedom by obeying the Creator. But what a tragedy! They

missed their mark by believing and obeying the Serpent—the Devil. Thus by disobeying God they lost their freedom and became slaves of sin and death. The sin of Adam and Eve was the darkest, the saddest and the most unfortunate moment in the history of mankind. Through their transgression “sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned . . . ” (Romans 5:12, NASB).

In Hitler’s concentration camps and in Russian-Siberian concentration camps, under present and past rulers, man has experienced terrible slavery. But sin has enslaved the whole mankind in the greatest and most horrible bondage that man has ever known.

How can man regain his lost freedom from the bondage of sin? God offers to man a way out of the bondage and slavery of sin. But man thinks he has a way out of his desperate situation. Let’s first take a look at two or three ways man has tried, and always failed, to free himself from the bondage of sin.

Some say, “Sin, forget it!” The suggestion is made not to make such a big issue of sin. Sin is just a mistake; just forget the whole matter. Get it out of your system. That is easy to say. But the trouble is, no one can forget his sins. The Psalmist says, “For I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever (constantly) before me” (Psalms 51:3, RSV). Forgetting sins will not do it—will not get us out of the bondage of sin.

Others think that severe discipline of the body and mind will free man from his sins. This theory has been tried and proven that it won’t work, by all kinds of monastic and ascetic disciplines. Some of the most shameful sins have been committed by those who gave themselves over to severe disciplines

of mind and body. It suffices to read a few books on this subject to be convinced of the folly of this doctrine.

Then there is the doctrine that man can be saved by the Law. The Law cannot free man from the slavery of sin. As he has done in the past, man still is stubbornly insisting that he can be saved by the Law. Let us carefully listen to what the apostle Peter says about the salvation through the observance of the Law. He calls the Law a yoke impossible to bear. "Now therefore, why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10, NASB). Thus there is no way that man can be delivered from sin by the Law. The apostle Paul, who knew the Law well, tried to keep it and here is his conclusion, "The Law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into bondage of sin . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:14, 24, NASB). The Law cannot save us! Then who can? The apostle Paul asks the question and gives the answer in the following verse 25, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

MAN'S FREEDOM THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Thanks be to God, I may be free from the bondage of sin through Jesus Christ. The Bible says that God wants every man and woman to be saved; set free from the bondage of sin and death through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. See I Timothy 2:3, 4. Jesus tells to you and to me, "Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32, NASB). The truth is that Jesus Christ is the truth. For He tells us, "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6, NASB). It is the truth that every man is a slave and in bondage to sin. Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is the slave of sin" (John

8:34). And the apostle Paul says that, "all have sinned and all fall short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23). In the Gospel of John (4:6) we have read that all men must come to the Father through Jesus Christ. And in John 8:36 Jesus says, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." The truth is that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This truth has a greater meaning for me when I read it in the following way: "God so loved Epi Stephan Bilak, that He gave His only begotten Son, that Epi Stephan Bilak, if he believes, should not perish, but have eternal life." Try to read this great Truth in the same way, that is, put your name instead of "the world" and see if what God says through His beloved Son, has not a greater meaning to you also. The truth is that, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Thus through the death of His only begotten Son God has made reconciliation with us. For it was the Father's good pleasure . . . through Jesus Christ to reconcile us to Himself and made peace through the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:12-22. To free us, God loved us and demonstrated to us His love by sending His Son to tell us the Good News that God has forgiven us, reconciled us, justified us and redeemed us through His Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the responsibility that God imposed upon Himself in order to free us from the bondage of sin.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST IMPLIES RESPONSIBILITY

Our recognition of God's redemption, freedom through Jesus Christ from the bondage of sin, implies an obligation, a duty, or responsibility to find, to obtain and to receive God's grace of freedom. I want to illustrate what I mean by a personal experience during World War II. In 1942, I was

taken from my native Ukraine to the forced labor camps—concentration camps. Thus I became a slave of Hitler's Germany. As we all know the Germans were defeated by the Allies. I was liberated with thousands of others. Suddenly I was faced with the responsibility of where to go and what to do. As I was thinking and worrying about what to do next, the Allies, our liberators, were fulfilling their responsibility toward those who had been liberated. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, created Displaced Persons camps to give the liberated people a shelter, food, and further guarantee of freedom. There in the D.P. camps the liberated enjoyed the full measure of benefits that freedom brought them. To enjoy these benefits of freedom every one had to enter into those camps. It was left to each person the responsibility to find out where the camps were located, then to go there and fill out the necessary papers to obtain the right to enter the D.P. camp and then to receive all the benefits of freedom. When I heard about the D.P. camps my problem of what to do and where to go was solved. I went there and fulfilled all the requirements in order to receive the right to enter into the camp and to receive the freedom with all its blessings. There were many who did not come to the camps and consequently lost their freedom, even though they were liberated just like others and were entitled to benefit fully from their freedom. They did not obtain what was rightfully theirs simply because they failed in their responsibility to come to the camps and comply with the very simple, but indispensable, formalities.

Incidentally, it was in this UNRRA organized D.P. Camp No. 543 in Fritzlar, near Cassel, West Germany, that I made the most wonderful discovery of my life. I learned that God had prepared a long time ago freedom for me from my sins—freedom through Jesus Christ. What a tremendous discovery! A freedom that only God can give us. I also found

out that I had a responsibility to comply with God's rules in order to be able to be in Christ and benefit to the fullest measure of God's grace; the redemption through the blood of my Redeemer Jesus Christ. I gladly complied with God's wishes that I should believe in His Son Jesus Christ, repent of my sins and be buried, that is baptized, into Christ to become a new creature; free, pardoned, redeemed and justified through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Just think, God has prepared all this a long, long time ago and is now waiting for all men to come to Him to be reconciled through His Son Jesus Christ and to obtain freedom from the bondage of sin.

I hope each of you has made this discovery as I have made, that God loves you personally and that He has sent His Son to die for your sins to rehabilitate you from the slavery of sin. Thanks be to God we are free from the bondage of sin, through His Son, our Redeemer who will enable us to safeguard our freedom of the Spirit.

RESPONSIBILITY TO SAFEGUARD FREEDOM

When I was a small boy we did not have a radio or TV set, but we had a charming, grey—almost white—haired old gentleman. The people in town called him Socrates (Socrates the story-teller), and he loved people; children, young people and old. He had traveled all over the world, but he came back to his village to retire. I spent as much time listening to him as my children have spent listening to Captain Kangaroo. He used to tell us that there was a great country called the United States, and that there the boys and girls, young and old had more freedom and peace than in any other country in the world.

In 1954, I came to the United States on the largest, most luxurious and fastest ship, the "New SS United States." It was early in the evening just as the lights were turned on in New York City. The ship was approaching the New York harbor, passing slowly by the majestic Statue of Liberty, the symbol of freedom, holding proudly the burning torch. Some of the people on the ship deck were shouting with much excitement, "Freedom, Freedom," and others, with tears in their eyes, were whispering, "Freedom at last, liberty!" There was an old professor amongst us who started to tell us the story of the statue and its real meaning, which was, "Liberty (Freedom), enlightening the world." As I was contemplating the great lady—Liberty, I was deeply moved and suddenly I remembered all the stories about the United States that I heard as a small boy from my neighbor, the old philosopher. I said to myself, "This is great! Everything is great! The ship, the statue, the country. Great Freedom . . . and it is going to be my country, my great Freedom."

Now, over twenty years later, I still believe and declare, "This is the greatest country and the greatest freedom in the world!" But there is a real danger that we may some day lose this great freedom if we forget our responsibility as U.S. citizens. The responsibility of every American is to keep this country great and strong if we want to safeguard our freedom. I have heard at least five U.S. presidents say that we must be a strong nation to defend our freedom. Our defense capability should be second to none.

I would like to suggest, and I think it ties in beautifully with America's Bicentennial Celebration, that besides the Statue of Liberty there should be erected a Statue of Responsibility to remind us of our responsibility to keep this country strong, that it may be able to safeguard the freedom that our forefathers obtained through many sacrificial lives.

As Christians we have the Cross of Jesus Christ as a monument to remind us that freedom in Christ was obtained at a tremendous cost, the sacrifice of God's Son. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is the monument of responsibility.

All of us, free men and women in Christ, have the responsibility to safeguard our freedom in the Lord. To do this we must be strong in the Faith and armed with spiritual defense weapons, because the watchmen of our enemies do not sleep; in fact, they are constantly trying to defeat and destroy us. The apostle Paul, writing to the Galatian Christians said, "Christ set us free, to be free men. Stand firm, then, and refuse to be tied to the yoke of slavery again" (Galatians 5:1, NEB).

Throughout the entire New Testament, and especially in the epistles of Paul, Christians are warned about a real danger of losing their freedom in Jesus Christ. For this reason we are reminded in many ways to be strong in our belief in Jesus Christ if we want to remain free in the Lord.

Now let us take just a look at some of the passages in the Word of God where we are reminded by the Scriptures about our responsibility to be strong or to stand firm in Jesus Christ and to refuse to surrender to bondage again.

STAND FIRM, DO NOT SURRENDER

To stand firm in Jesus Christ, every Christian has the responsibility as the apostle Paul says, to: "Be rooted in Him; (in Jesus Christ) be built in Him; be consolidated in the faith you were taught; let your hearts overflow with thankfulness" (Colossians 2:7, NEB).

The apostle Paul uses three illustrations to show us how a Christian can become firm in his faith in Jesus Christ. The

first is about being rooted in Jesus Christ. There are trees like the English walnut and the oak; they sink their roots very deeply into the ground. We see quite often these trees standing alone in the fields. No matter how strong the winds blow they stand immovable because they are well rooted.

The second is about being built in Christ. Jesus Christ is the cornerstone mentioned in I Peter 2:7; He is our only foundation, I Corinthians 3:11; and the foundation of God stands sure, II Timothy 2:19. I am amazed at the way the Swiss build. Almost everywhere, their towns are built on a solid rock, or dug into a rock, and reinforced with steel. Not far from Lausanne is a town called, "Romainmotier." There you can see fifteen centuries of architecture preserved almost intact because the town was well built on a solid foundation.

The third illustration is about consolidation of our faith in Jesus Christ as we are taught in the Scriptures. I am sure that almost all of us know what it means to consolidate different payments into one payment. The banks quite often encourage people to do just that so that one check can pay all bills. There is always strength in consolidation, and this we must have to be strong in our faith.

Our faith in Jesus Christ should be deeply rooted, well built and completely consolidated so that no matter what storm in life blows we may be able to sing the song of victory with the apostle Paul . . .

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'For thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who

loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created things, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord
Romans 8:35-39. NASB.

To be strong and to be able to stand firm in the Lord shall take all the defensive weapons of the Word of God as the apostle Paul teaches,

Finally then, find your strength in the Lord, in his mighty power. Put on all the armour which God provides, so that you may be able to stand firm against the devices of the devil. For our fight is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers, against the authorities and potentates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens. Therefore, take up God's armour; then you will be able to stand your ground when things are at their worst, to complete every task and still stand. Stand firm, I say. Buckle on the belt of truth; for coat of mail put on integrity; let the shoes on your feet be the gospel of peace, to give you firm footing; and, with all these, take up the great shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take salvation for helmet; for sword, take that which the Spirit gives you—the words that come from God. Give yourselves wholly to prayer and entreaty; pray on every occasion in the power of the Spirit. Ephesians 6:10-18. NEB.

DO NOT SURRENDER TO MEN

The apostle Paul tells the Corinthians to refuse to surrender to the slavery of men: "You were bought (redeemed) with a

price (sacrifice of Jesus Christ); do not become slaves of men" (I Corinthians 7:23. NASB). Already in the apostolic days there were men in the Body of Christ who were enemies of God's freedom in Jesus Christ. Paul exposed them and withstood them courageously. His example should inspire and encourage us today to do likewise when someone tries to rob us of our freedom in Jesus Christ. It is the responsibility of all men, free in Christ, to withstand courageously all enemies of freedom in the Lord.

Now, let us take a look at some of the adversaries of Christian freedom in the early Church. This will be helpful to us to identify those in the Lord's Body today. There were false apostles, "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ" (II Corinthians 11:13, NASB). Counterfeit apostles were enslaving, devouring, taking advantage, exalting themselves and hitting in the face the Christians in the Church in Corinth (II Corinthians 11:20).

Some of the methods used to enslave us in bondage of men are: persuasive arguments, philosophy, traditions of men, precepts in regard to food, drink, festival, new moon, Sabbath day, self-abasement, worship of angels, visions, and all sorts of decrees such as, "Do not handle," "Do not taste," "Do not touch," (Colossians 2:4-22).

These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. Colossians 2:23. NASB.

Paul says here again and again, "See to it that no one take you captive through the wisdom of man-made religion!"

Freedom in Christ is the greatest thing in the world. See to it that no power on earth take you captive or rob you of your freedom in the Gospel.

FREEDOM MUST BE SHARED

Our recognition of God's redemption, freedom through Jesus Christ from the bondage of sin, implies more than the responsibility to find, to obtain and to enjoy our freedom in the Lord. This so great a freedom becomes really meaningful if it is shared. Jesus Christ brought to us the Good News of our redemption through His coming into the world and giving His life. He also gave the command to share our freedom with others. His example compels us to share this freedom. And man's yearning for freedom urges us to share it with him.

Now let us look together at the Great Commission or the direct command of Jesus Christ to go to the world with the Good News of freedom.

Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples; baptize men everywhere in the name of the Father and The Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And be assured, I am with you always, to the end of time. Matthew 28:19-20. NEB.

And in the Gospel of Mark we read:

Go forth to every part of the world, and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation. Those who believe it and receive baptism will find salvation (freedom); those who do not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-16. NEB.

In His prayer for His disciples Christ was saying to God: "I sent them into the world just as you sent me into the world," (John 17:18, GNFMM). And then to the disciples he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me so I send you," (John 20:21, GNFMM). In the Gospel of John (3:16) we are told how and why God sent His Son. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Jesus has commanded us to go, and sent us into the world by His example. And the apostle John says that it is our responsibility to do it as Jesus Christ did: "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," (I John 3:16, NASB). The apostle Paul felt compelled to proclaim the Good News: "For if I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel" (I Corinthians 9:16, NASB). The apostle felt obligated to all men to share the Gospel because it is God's power to give men freedom in Christ. Paul says, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish," and "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:14, 16 NASB).

The Church in the apostolic days and for the following first three centuries was predominately a missionary church. Later, however, the missionary zeal and vision was lost, and the dark ages of the Church began, and the missionary church disappeared completely.

It seems to me that there were, and still are, three reasons for the lack of missionary fervor. First, doctrinal squabbles. The young North African church fought over doctrinal squabbles and did not have time or energy to go to the rest of

Africa to take the Good News of redemption, and the Muslims routed it out.

Secondly, it was indifference. The Armenian church never got excited to give the Good News to their neighbors, the Turks, and the Turks found them and slaughtered them.

Thirdly, the holy orthodoxy. The Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox was so preoccupied with its orthodoxy, "One Church, one Doctrine, one people and one language" that they never gave the Gospel of Christ to the Slavic people as they should have, and the communists blotted them out. Their sins found them out and uprooted them.

Let these three examples be a warning to us that we may not fall into the same trap. Some say that we have more missionaries than ever before, but I am not sure. In Western Europe our missionary strength is on the decline, and in Eastern Europe there is very little effort to reach the Slavic world with the message of reconciliation and redemption. The Slavic world is calling us like the Macedonians called the apostle Paul. Letters are reaching us from Russia, Ukraine and other Slavic nations begging for Bibles, New Testaments, tracts and for daily broadcasts of the Gospel. Their call can best be expressed perhaps by the Ukrainian poet, Taras Shvechenko:

"The day goes by, the night goes by. . .
 Pressing my weary head in hands each night
 I wondering ask, 'Why does not come
 The apostle of Truth and Light?' " (Translation by ESB)

The Macedonian call expressed here by Taras Shvechenko is the call not only of the Slavic people, but it is the yearning of all mankind to be freed by Truth. The Truth is Jesus Christ and His Gospel of Redemption.

There is no excuse today for the church of Christ, for you and me, not to take the Good News to the world. I know that the enemies of the Gospel are talking about barriers and curtains that we cannot penetrate. But this is not so. "Where there is a will there is a way." There is no curtain or barrier that can stop God's message of Freedom. We all have the responsibility to be God's ambassadors to carry the glorious Gospel to the enslaved world in Sin:

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:20-21. NASB.

There are two ways by which we can fulfill our responsibility that freedom in Christ brings to us. We must either go personally or have a partnership in sending someone with the message of freedom, reconciliation and redemption.

Praises be to God for all who have grasped the meaning of freedom in Christ, who are safeguarding it, and who are sharing it with others. Be never discouraged in the responsibility of being an ambassador for God through Jesus Christ.

¹ See Mead, Frank S., *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, (Fleming H. Revell Company, Westwood, New Jersey, p. 150.)

FREEDOM FROM SIN

JAMES O. MAXWELL

James O. Maxwell was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 13, 1938. His family moved to Toledo, Ohio, while he was in his early adolescence. James graduated from Edward Drummond Libbey High School in Toledo in 1956. He received the A.A. degree (Associate of Arts) from Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, in 1959. He received the B.A. degree in Speech Education at George Pepperdine University in 1961.



James served as minister to the Church of Christ in North Gulfport, Mississippi from 1962-1964. While in Gulfport, he did substitute teaching in the public schools. He also delivered the Baccalaureate address to the 1963 graduating class of the North Gulfport High School.

James served as minister to the Cleveland Avenue Church of Christ from 1964-1968, in Columbus, Ohio. While in Columbus, he worked as a Personnel Technician with the City of Columbus Civil Service Commission. There, he prepared employment tests, interviewed job applicants, and prepared job advertisements for the mass media. He finished the class work for the M.A. in Speech Communication at the Ohio State University in Columbus.

In 1968, James moved to Kansas City, to serve what is presently known as the Roswell Church of Christ. While in Kansas City, the church where James labored more than doubled its membership, tripled its contributions, and constructed a new church edifice. Also, James was on the board of directors to a home for juvenile boys. He served as camp director and counselor in area Christian Camps. He served as one of the referral counselors to alcoholic offenders referred by the Municipal Court of Kansas City. He received the M.R.E. (Master of Religious Education) degree from Central Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas. He worked toward the Ph.D. at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and is currently doing doctoral study at East Texas State University.

James has done extensive speaking in gospel meetings, youth rallies, public school programs, teacher training, church and college lectureships. He has preached on the radio in every city he has served as local minister. He delivered a week of devotional messages on "Moments of Meditation," Channel 5, Kansas City, Missouri. In 1971, he was selected as outstanding Alumnus of Southwestern Christian College, and was selected as one of the outstanding young men in America in 1972. In June, 1971, James was appointed Academic Dean at SWCC. He is the editor of the *SWCC COMMUNIQUE*. Also, he is the editor of two books of SWCC lectures: *We Hold These Truths* and *Teaching and Admonishing One Another*. He is the Author of two books: *The Way of Truth* and *There Is A Lion in the Way*, which was published in 1975.

James is married to the former Betty Grace Allison of Gary, West Virginia. They have three children: James Apollos, 8; Miriam Rene, 7; and Julian DeShawn, 4.

In Romans 6:17-18, Paul thanked God that he and the Roman Christians had been freed from the bondage of sin, and had become the bondsmen of righteousness. Having been the ringleader of sinners before his conversion, Paul could vividly and meaningfully contrast the liberating and glorious

aspects of righteousness to the bitter dregs of sin. Without a realization of the gripping enslavement and the deceptive enticements of sin, one cannot fathom what freedom from sin is and the ecstatic joy that accompanies this freedom.

Isaiah, seeing Israel's gross blindness to their sins, exclaimed, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20) Many of the Israelites did not recognize the magnitude of sin or did not believe in the reality of sin. The prophet Amos urged Israel to "Hate the evil and love the good. . ." (Amos 5:15). But Israel loved the evil and hated the good. Just as Israel was twisted in values and morality, the world today is also twisted.

There are those who deny that sin exists. The atheist denies the reality of sin. Existentialists water down sin, and believe that man is personally responsible to himself for what he does, and not to anyone or anything else. Psychoanalysts do not use the word "sin" very often because of the alleged aggressive and self-destructive implications of the word.

Harold C. Gardiner said, "The greatest of all sins is the philosophizing of sin out of existence." Gerald Vann said, "Only a fool could deny the fact of sin, though we may choose to call it by another name." I believe that we as Christians will never be able to live the Christian life in liberty and the pursuit of happiness, until we face the facts that sin is sin, and cannot be dressed up in nice and respectable descriptions. No matter how many new translations of the Bible are published, the people still sin in the same way.

Dr. Karl Menninger was one of the principal speakers of the convention of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which convened in Dallas, Texas, in December of

1974. His thought-provoking speech was almost a complete review of his recently published book: *Whatever Became of Sin*. He quoted from his book that the

very word 'sin,' which seems to have disappeared, was a proud word. It was once a strong word, an ominous and serious word. . . . But the word went away. It has almost disappeared-the word, along with the notion. Why? Doesn't anyone believe in sin? ¹

Sitting while he was speaking, Dr. Menninger seriously added,

Calling something a 'sin' and dealing with it as such may be a useful salvage or coping device. It does little good to repent a symptom, but it may do a great harm not to repent a sin. ²

No matter how many men reject the concept of the existence of sin, I believe that sin is real because it is a theme that runs through the Bible from the beginning to the end. There are many words in the New Testament that are translated "sin," but one of the most frequently used words is "harmatia" in the Greek. It means "a missing of the target." Sin is the missing of the target at which life must aim and at which life ought to hit. Sin is rebellion against God and His standards. Sin is failure to live up to God's standards. The apostle John wrote that ". . . sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4 ASV). Again John proclaimed that one does not have God when he ". . . goes beyond the limits of the teachings of Christ. . . ." (I John 1:9 TCNT).

Even if one, denying the existence of sin, does not believe in the Bible, he should be constrained to admit the reality of sin by observing the corruption of the decadent world. We live in a jazzed-up, wound-up, tuned-in and turned-on society. It

appears that "everything nailed down is coming loose," and everything tailored is ripping apart at the seams.

It has been fittingly expressed that we live in an "age of aspirin, anxiety, analysis and the atom." I believe that our world is in trouble, serious trouble, and this trouble is because of sin. In a Shakespearean drama entitled, "Julius Caesar," Marc Antony lamented at Caesar's funeral: "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." In regard to the extreme sinfulness of our world, "if you have tears prepare to shed them now." I am not a prophet of gloom and doom; I am merely a casual observer of the "signs of the times."

What is wrong with a nation where fear grips our souls and dampens our spirits? There used to be a time when it was not safe for a woman to walk the streets at night; now it is not safe for a man to walk the streets at night. What is wrong with a nation where its citizens commit suicide at the rate of eleven per 100,000 people, and murder at the rate of six per 100,000? What is wrong with a nation where a violent crime takes place every minute, and where billions of tranquilizers are prescribed each year? Norman Vincent Peale disclosed in an address on television that "it takes sixty million pills to put America to sleep each night." What is wrong with a nation where one out of every two hospital beds is filled by a mental patient? What is wrong with a nation where one out of every three marriages ends on the rocks of divorce? The answer to all these questions is SIN! Sin cannot be overlooked when we understand that there are approximately six million alcoholics in America, and scores of people who believe that dope is hope. Some feel that they can infuse hope in their brains by injecting dope in their veins. Dope is not hope, but spells doom, derision, and despair. These words are just as true now as when they were first propounded, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

There are scores of people who do not take the position that sin exists, yet there are many who have weakened to the practice of not calling sin what it is -SIN. People call sin error, a mistake, a weakness, a hang-up, a nervous condition, maladjustment, a hereditary trait, a problem, and psychological jitters. This practice has also crept into the Lord's Church. Several years ago, Christians that made confessions said, "I have sinned." Now we have a great number who say, "If I have sinned," or "I do not feel I have sinned, but I desire the prayers of the church." Some even say, "If I have offended anyone in this congregation, I ask his forgiveness" or "I have become weakened by satanic devices and worldly influences." Whatever became of sin? Why is it that Christians appear to be evading the word "sin" in their confessions? Why is it that you do not hear as many confessions today like the prodigal son made in Luke 15? Is it not because the world is too much with us and in us? Instead of some members who seek to be restored actually confessing, they are found reporting.

Why is it that we do not hear of too many congregations withdrawing from members who walk disorderly according to II Thessalonians 3:6? Is it because we do not have disorderly members? Is it because the Bible does not mean what it says on church discipline? Or is it because we have weakened to the practice of rationalizing away the word "sin," and the powerful effect of sin?

Another way in which the Church and our world are getting away from the reality of sin is by using words and expressions that do not carry the same impact as the earlier translations of the Bible, and the earlier modes of communication convey them. Instead of using the terms adultery and fornication we say immorality, promiscuity, episode, coitus, and premarital and extramarital relationship. Instead of saying kill and murder, we say homicide. Instead of saying that we hate

someone or have a grudge against someone; we say that we have a personality conflict, a breakdown in communication, incompatibility or that we cannot "set horses."

Instead of saying that one is a homosexual or that one has unnatural affections and has sinned against God and nature, we say that the person is "gay" or "funny." While the homosexual should be understood as needing help; we cannot and must not overlook the fact that SIN is involved (Romans 1:24-32). While alcoholism has been popularly referred to as a disease or an illness, we cannot overlook the fact that drunkenness involves SIN (I Cor. 6:10, Eph. 5:18). Instead of saying the word drunk, we say intoxicated, inebriated, and stoned. Instead of saying, the words slander and gossip we say women's talk, men's talk, or grapevine news.

Instead of referring to a brother as covetous, tight or stingy toward the Lord, we say he is thrifty.

When a brother looks at life through dollar sign eyes, and would tend to agree with the so-called reverend Ike that "it is not the love of money that is the root of all evil, but the lack of money," I do not call that progress, but materialism. When brethren ignore spirituality, miss the services of the church, sacrifice their wives and children, working extremely long hours in order to keep up the "Joneses" and pass up the "Smiths," I do not call this initiative, success or getting ahead; I call it materialism. Unless we as churchmen start calling materialism what it is and calling it SIN, we are headed for spiritual bankruptcy and ruin!

In Salem Kirban's book entitled, *Your Last Goodbye*, the following statement greatly describes the present situation:

. . .The modern American is a person who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed high-way on

credit card gas to open a charge account at a department store so he can fill his savings-and loan-financed home with installment-purchased furniture.³

It has been well said that "people spend money they do not have to buy things they do not need, to impress folks they do not like." So many people in the church appear to feel that they have everything they need, and that they do not need God. The following, written by Edward Ziegler of Roanoke, Virginia, is a vivid picture of the materialistic madness of our age:

**THE 23rd PSALM
(Materialist's Version)**

Science is my Shepherd,
I shall not want;
He maketh me to lie down on rubber
foam mattresses;
He leadeth me beside six-lane highways.
He rejuvenateth my thyroid glands;
He leadeth me in the paths of psychoanalysis
for peace of mind's sake.
Yea, though I walk throught the valley of
the iron curtain, I will fear no
communist; for thou art with me;
thy radar screen and thy hydrogen
bomb, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a banquet before me in
the presence of the world's billion
hungry people.
Thou anointest my head with home permanents.
My beer glass foameth over.
Surely prosperity and pleasure shall follow
me all the days of my life; and I will
dwell in Shangri-la forever.⁴

Sad to say , there are far too many members of the Lord's Church who believe that one race is inherently better and more superior than another race. They put all or practically all people within other races in the same "bag." They generalize from particulars and they evaluate men by the color of their skin, the texture of their hair and the shape of the of their facial features, rather than by the quality of their character, and the depth of their deportment. They tend to reject most gestures made to improve the fellowship among Christians of different ethnic backgrounds. To bring it closer to home, most of the problem for us appears to be among black Christians and white Christians. While there has been progress made in race relations among Christians, there is still a gigantic gulf dividing us. We almost have two separate brotherhoods, two separate fellowships, and two separate churches—the black church and the white church. God forbid! Christ only intended for there to be one Church, and died for one church. We preach and teach that there is one, but our practice frequently suggests that there are two.

Some black brethren and white brethren call this cantankerous condition a social inevitability, a racial problem, cultural distance, and "birds of feather" sticking together, but I have other descriptions for it. I call it "respect of persons," prejudice and racism. Many black Christians place all the racism on white Christians, and have been influenced by the Black Muslims and black extremists. I tell them as well as white Christians that racism is wrong, and is sin no matter what side of the fence it is on! God has not created a super-skinned race; for it has well been said that "six feet under the earth, we are all the same size." If we as Christians do not start acting like God, from the standpoint of spiritual brotherhood and human existence, has created all men equal, we will all be cremated equal! Brethren, the only way we are going to change the racial climate within the church is to call

racism sin; and deal with it in the light of God's Word. Let us practice the Scriptures we have been preaching, such as, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Because of the plague and the plight of sin, man's greatest challenge and highest quest should be freedom from sin. In November, 1751, this famous Scriptural quotation from Leviticus 10:25 was inscribed on what we know as the Liberty Bell: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land, and unto all the inhabitants thereof." Twenty-five years later the Declaration of Independence was signed. For many years following this historic event the Liberty Bell was rung each year to proclaim the significance of American freedom.

We are cognizant of the fact that while American freedom is meaningful and treasurable, it has not been maintained without responsibility and painstaking effort. Frederick Douglass, the great black abolitionist and orator, used his potent pen to write a letter, involving freedom from slavery, to Gerrit Smith. This letter, written in 1849, contained these famous words:

. . .If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. . .This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be a both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. . .Men may not get all they pay for in this world; but they must certainly pay for all they get.⁵

Freedom is never free, but involves sacrifice and loyalty.

In the book of Leviticus we read of the strict laws and regulations that were binding upon the Israelites. Every phase

of the life of the Israelites was controlled. Economics, politics, marriage, family life, cooking, domestic chores and religious rituals were rigidly governed. In the midst of the demands of the Mosaic Law, there was provided a jubilee year, and during that year, slaves, who were citizens of Israel, were to be freed. It was in relation to this jubilee year that the words, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land. . ." were given. The jubilee year came every fifty years, which means that the average man could only expect one year of liberty during a lifetime. This reveals to us that liberty was such an important commodity that God only trusted the Israelites with it two years out of every century.

Thank God! The liberty bell of the gospel of Christ has been rung, and the captives of sin have been emancipated through the gospel. Jesus beautifully stressed the concept of liberty when he said, ". . . Everyone who acts sinfully is the slave of sin" (John 8:24, KNOX). Again He sounded out the truth when He uttered, "So if the Son liberates you, then you are unquestionably free" (John 8:36, Berkeley).

God be thanked that we were freed from the bondage, the curse and the condemnation of the Law by the gospel of Christ. We are free from the "wages of sin," the "sting of death" and the terror of the grave. We are not just freed for one year or two years, but we are free for a lifetime and for eternity.

It is paradoxical how a Christian can be free, and yet not be free. It is a paradox how Paul could teach in Romans 6:17-18 that we are freed as servants of sin to be made **SERVANTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**. It is equally strange, but true, how Paul could say in the openings of some of his epistles: "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ. . ." when from the obvious surface he was a prisoner of Rome. R. Earl Allen in his book, *Bible*

Paradoxes, strikingly stated that Paul “was a prisoner of Christ while a prisoner of Rome, for although Rome held the key to his chains, God held the key to his heart.”⁶ The hymn writer, George Matheson has expressed it: “Make me a captive, Lord, And then I shall be free. Force me to render up my sword; and I will conqueror be.” As William Temple says, “We need to be delivered from the freedom which is perfect bondage into the bondage which is perfect freedom.”

When an individual is released from his slavery of sin and desires the slavery of God’s service, he has found the freedom of Jesus Christ and he is free indeed! Dr. Louis H. Valbracht in his book entitled, *Survival in the Rat Race*, stressed a beautiful point from the 3rd chapter of I Corinthians, verses 21-23 where Paul wrote:

... For all things are yours. . . whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.

Valbracht revealed that

our trouble is that we habitually try to tear the text in two. All things CANNOT belong to us—UNLESS WE BELONG! That which BELONGS to us, we struggle for. That to which we belong, we forget. Liberty? That is very desirable. Loyalty? That is too demanding. To have life say to us: “All things are yours,” that is joyous. To have life say to us “And you are Christ’s,” that is too serious, much too serious. And yet, wherever we look in life, we cannot have the one without the other.⁷

The man who feels that he should be absolutely free is chained to false thinking. Halford Luccock has said: “All men

are prisoners to something. We merely choose our prison." Choose to be a slave set free in Christ, a prisoner without chains. All things are yours—IF you are Christ's. If so, you are free from the sin that binds, grinds, and blinds; free from the sin that confuses, misuses, and abuses; free from the sin that scolds, molds, and controls. If we are free from the sin, let us rid ourselves from long faces, sour dispositions, and cancerous complacency! If we are free from sin, let us ring the liberty bell of righteousness, and "proclaim liberty throughout all the land. . ." If we are free from sin, let us strive with all that is within us to ring the liberty bell of the gospel and gratitude, and let it continue to toll with unending force. Then, and only then, can we take the world for Christ because we have been taken by Christ for the world.

1 Menninger, Karl Dr., *Whatever Became of Sin?* New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1973, p. 14.

2 Ibid., p. 48.

3 Kirban, Salem, *Your Last Goodbye*, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1973, p. 126.

4 Rhodes, Arnold Black, *The Church Faces the Isms*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1958, p. 283.

5 Barbour, Floyd B., *The Black Power Revolt*, Toronto and Ontario, Canada: The Macmillan Company, 1968, p. 36.

6 Allen, R. Earl, *Bible Paradoxes*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1963, p. 45.

7 Valbracht, Louis H., *Survival In The Rat Race*, Lima, Ohio: C.S.S. Publishing Company, 1971, p. 136.

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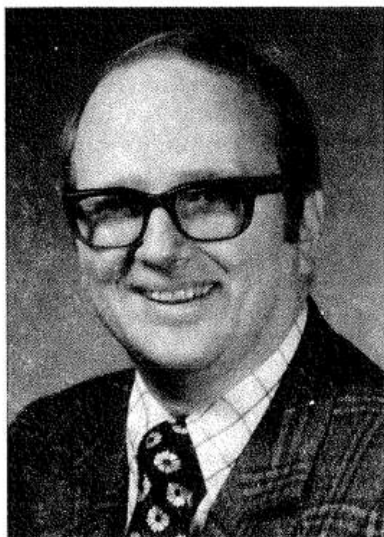
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THE FREE MAN IN CHRIST

RICHARD ROGERS

Richard Rogers preaches for the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas. In addition to his work with the local congregation he teaches in the Sunset School of Preaching. He is the author of several books. Among them are: Hallelujah Anyway (Revelation), Furnace of Affliction (Job), Minor Prophets, It's A Great Life (1 John) and has co-authored books on Christian Development and TLC (The Love of Christ) which are widely used by local congregations.



Brother Rogers has had a great evangelistic interest in Asia, especially in Thailand and Burma and is much in demand all over the world, as a speaker in motivating congregations toward greater involvement in mission work and congregational development.

He resides in Lubbock with his wife, Barbara, and their four children.

A soldier reported to his commanding officer, "I have taken a prisoner." His commander said, "Bring him along with

you." "He won't come," complained the soldier." "Well, then, come yourself," replied the officer. "I can't. He won't let me," was the final acknowledgement. I fear that there are a lot of Christians no more victorious than this soldier. All men in Christ have indeed been freed from the penalty of sin. But what of its power and practice? Are we to march forever around the mountain of our justification? Should we not march toward the promised land in order to possess our eternal inheritance? Were we not declared righteous in Christ that we might be holy in life?

Just what is Christian freedom? Is it what some have declared in word and many by practice—liberty to do whatever we will—to practice whatever questionable deeds we like? On the other hand is freedom but a new word for a new slavery? Do we exchange the shackles of old law for the manacles of a new bondage? Read Galatians 5:13-26 and it will be very evident that liberty must not be perverted into license. Read Galatians 5:1-12 and learn that legalism can indeed destroy liberty. The purpose of this lesson is to discuss (1) What freedom is and (2) The privileges of freedom. The emphasis will be on the latter.

Freedom in Christ is the theme of all of the epistles but surely of none more than the book of Romans. In this grand book, dealing with the romance God has with man, Paul first sets forth the tragedy of sin (1:18-3:20). Then, in beautiful language, our desperate condition of slavery is justified by the death of Christ and we become free men (3:21-5:21). Justification issues in sanctification—the giving of life is to be followed by the living of life (6:1-7:6). The law-life is one of frustration, futility, and final defeat (7:7-25). However, made free by the Spirit of life, we can glorify God by living Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, fruitful lives (8:1-39).

How man is justified is presented clearly and fully in Romans 3:21-4:25). A careful reading of this text makes ten points concerning freedom from sin very evident.

1. Freedom is apart from law—3:21a. Man cannot fulfill the law; for sin has so corrupted his moral nature that all the acts which flow from it are tainted, and he is unable to render that perfect obedience which the law demands, and which alone can carry its rewards. How can a transgressor of the law be justified by the law he has violated?

2. Freedom was witnessed to by the law and the prophets—3:21b. Not only by the hundreds of passages that speak of the coming kingdom of peace, but also by every type and shadow of the law, by every note of the sweet singers, by every wise statement of the proverbs and by God's continual providence in the history of Israel.

3. Freedom comes through faith—3:22. Faith is that steadfast belief, trust and commitment that causes one to obey without question the dictates and desires of another (compare Thayers Lexicon page 511).

4. Freedom does not involve human merit—3:24a. The word translated "freely" is used in John 15:25, "But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me *without a cause*." The words "without a cause" translate the same word translated "freely" in Romans 3:24. The total cause of their hatred was on their part, none on Jesus' part. So, the total cause of our salvation is found in God's love, mercy, and kindness and none in our works (Titus 3:4-7).

5. Freedom does not come by human purchase—3:24b. It is by grace through the redemption that Christ makes through His blood. "Jesus paid it all! All to Him I owe!"

6. Freedom is satisfying in its effects—3:25-26. This is seen first in the word “propitiation.” The word means that God has offered an appeasing or satisfying sacrifice in the death of His Son. This same word is used in Hebrews 9:5 for the mercy seat. It was the blood of animals that allowed man to find mercy at God’s seat of justice. So it is today with the blood of Jesus. In the second place, this sacrifice causes God to be just, and be seen to be so, in the forgiving of sins. Jesus’ blood is sufficient for the remitting of all sins from Adam to the last.

7. Freedom excludes all boasting—3:27-30. This is true for three reasons. First, man’s performance is always, and will always be, below the required perfection. Second, there is now no national advantage, no Jew or Gentile. And last, faith is the essential requirement.

8. Freedom establishes law, not destroys it—3:31. Paul’s quotes of the law throughout his epistles indicate his concept of Jesus and His freeing words being foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Without Christian freedom the Old Testament would be an incomplete book.

9. Freedom is illustrated by Abraham and David—4:1-16. Abraham, before the law and before circumcision, was justified by faith apart from works (v. 1-5, 9-16). David, living under law and circumcision, was justified by faith apart from works (v. 6-8).

10. Freedom demands Abrahamic, obedient faith—4:17-25. Abraham’s faith was reckoned in God (v. 17); was based on God’s word (v. 18); considered God’s promises (v. 19-20); was persuaded God was able and faithful (v. 21) and, therefore, reached the point of justification (v. 22-25).

These points should make it abundantly clear that man is free because of God’s power in his life and not because of any

ability on the part of man. For what purposes did God free man? What are the benefits of this freedom in Christ?

The free man in Christ is discussed in all his characteristics and privileges in the grand climactic 8th chapter of Romans. What a marked contrast one can see between chapter 7 and 8. In the seventh chapter we see a man "in sin," in the eighth chapter we see a man "in Christ." In the seventh chapter he is a "wretched man" seeking deliverance, in the eighth chapter he is a "victorious man" happy in his security. In the seventh chapter it was Christ's work *"for"* us, in the eighth chapter, it is Christ's work *in* us. In the seventh chapter it is the *effort* of the human personality, in chapter eight it is the *effect* of the divine personality of Christ in us through the Holy Spirit. In the seventh chapter the personal pronoun "I" is mentioned thirty times, in the eighth chapter only two times.

On the other hand, in the eighth chapter the Holy Spirit is mentioned twenty times while in the seventh chapter only once. In chapter seven we see a man with a despairing cry, in chapter eight we see a man with a conquering Christ. In chapter seven there is a record of a conflict, while in chapter eight there is the record of a conquest. Chapter eight begins with "no condemnation and ends with "no separation," while in between is "no defeat."

If you were to go into most any Swiss village near the Alps during the climbing season, you would see along the streets, in the public squares, and around the hotels, groups of strong and sturdy men. They are dressed in dark blue uniforms and wear silver badges on their coat lapels. These men are mountain guides. They were born into it. They went through careful training. They have passed rigid tests. They have but one business in life; it is climbing. That is the business of the Christian. His is the challenge of higher altitudes. His is the

life that goes from one degree of glory to another. Let us then reach for the most instead of being content with the least. Let us strike out for the heights! God will attend us!

THE POSSIBILITY OF FREEDOM, VERSES 1-11

The man in Christ is free from the condemnation of past sins, verses 1-4. This is a legal pronouncement of complete freedom from legal guiltiness. Whatever condemnation was justly due for personal guilt was completely met in Christ. We should be careful to notice what it says in the opening statement of the chapter. It does not say that there are no mistakes and no inconsistencies. But their occurrence does not affect his status before God. There are no degrees of relationship in our union with Christ. We are either vitally and wholly in union or else not at all. The *power* of this new life is found in "the Spirit of life" (v. 2). Deliverance now becomes an experience. We are free from something and for something. It means not only acquittal from sins but power over sin. The *provision* of this new life is Jesus, not the law (v. 3). Three great facts are found in this verse: (1) Deity—"his own Son;" (2) Incarnation—"in the likeness of sinful flesh;" (3) Atonement—"for sin." The secret of victory over sin is in the source of sin's conquest. It was in Christ's death. The *possibility* of this new life is that the law's requirement is fulfilled in us (v. 4). Our redemption and regeneration is not something negative. It blots out a past but offers a glorious present. It disengages hands and feet, heart and mind, from unworthy occupations, and gives them the dignity of a new service.

The man in Christ is free from the possession of a sinful nature—verses 5-9. The Psalmist cried out, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." The water brooks are the environment of the hart and God is the environment of the soul. As the water brooks

are designed by the Creator for the natural wants, so God implements the spiritual need of man. This is not done by repeating phrases or saying mechanical prayers, but by organic life union through a new birth and a new environment. There is a Bible anthropology and when we find its simple secrets, we find the ways of abundant life. There are two classes: "after the flesh" and "after the Spirit" (v. 5); two issues; carnality and spirituality (v. 6-8); two spheres: "in the flesh" and "in the Spirit" (v. 9). All Christians have the Spirit but not all Christians are controlled by the Spirit.

The man in Christ is free to overcome sin in view of coming resurrection—verses 10-11. Christ's present dwelling within does not change our physical relationship but does give life to our spirit (v. 10). However, because the Spirit dwells within us, as God raised Jesus so will he raise us. In prospect of this resurrection, we will keep ourselves pure (Compare 1 John 3:1-3).

THE PRIVILEGES OF FREEDOM, VERSES 12-17

A New Position (v. 12). We now owe absolutely nothing to the flesh. We are presently totally indebted to Christ.

A New Power (v. 13). The Holy Spirit, as He works through the Word in our lives, enables us to put to death the thoughts and deeds of the flesh (Compare 2 Peter 1:3-4).

A New Father (v. 14-15). The test of sonship is the Holy Spirit's leadership. We have received a new spirit of adoption to replace the old spirit of bondage. Adoption indicates a family relationship. What happens when this occurs? We cry, "Abba, Father," literally "My Father, my own dear Father." It is a term of endearment and of intimacy. It is not the Jewish cry of Jehovah. It is not the Gentile cry of Creator. It is

not the distant, far away, formal name that an outsider ascribes to deity. It is something new and intimate. It is a family name. It is a personal name.

A New Witness (v. 16). Notice carefully the preposition. The Spirit witnesses *with* my spirit, not *to* my spirit. The Spirit cries "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6). Our spirit cries, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). Hence, my spirit and God's Spirit both witness to my sonship. The Spirit also witnesses through the word that I have obeyed.

A New Inheritance (v. 17). It is a vast inheritance kept in trust against the day of our completed redemption. But even so, the present moment is not wanting in the abundance of our Father's riches. (Compare 2 Corinthians 8:9). The only requirement for this inheritance is that we suffer with Jesus.

THE ENCOURAGEMENTS TO FREEDOM, VERSES 18-39

The Surpassing Greatness Of The Coming Glory, verses 18-25. This life, at its very best, is one of extreme suffering and trials. But in view of coming glory it is well worth all the trouble. Compare 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10. Paul says the whole creation suffers because of God's subjecting it to vanity. We suffer even more so as Christians but are saved in hope of the redemption of our bodies (Compare Philippians 3:20-21).

The Intercession Of The Holy Spirit, verses 26-27. Never allow yourself to sink so deep in the oblivion of your difficulties that you forget the phrase, "The Spirit also helpeth." There may not seem to be a way out, but there is a way up. Having reached the twenty-sixth verse, we reach a place of high privilege. When the thing for which we need to pray is far past the ability of our mind and all we can do is feel in

unutterable groanings, we can be assured of this intercession. In verse twenty-seven we behold God searching the heart. For this reason, the Christian's prayer life is made both intelligent and important. It is a link to God. It is the fulfillment of a great divine law—the law of intercession by which God sustains us to the day of our completed redemption.

The Intervention Of God, verses 28-30. Here is God's providential supervision of the events of our lives. Your attention is now called to six things found in this Divine Intervention.

1. *The certainty of this providence*—"we know." Here faith is removed beyond the place of speculation or conjecture and life is consequently removed from the realm of fate. Here is the cognition of faith and the recognition of facts. Faith says "we know." That kind of faith is not an impractical piety that puts a negative mark upon reality. It is a recognition of the facts, but a further recognition that God is behind the facts.

Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
But behind the dim unknown,
Stands God keeping watch over His own.

2. *The scope of this providence*—"all things." This does not mean that all things are good things, for there are many things that occur to us, which in themselves are not good. They are painful and cruel. Nevertheless, their place in the whole pattern of divine purpose will cause them to be resolved for good.

3. *The continuity of this providence*—"work." This operation is like the law of gravity. There is no intermittent suspension and no lapse in its operation. It is constantly in

force. It does not work today and languish tomorrow. It does not work in some things and fail in others.

4. *The unity of this providence*—“*together.*” This means that there is co-operation and agreement in events. One event, isolated from the whole, may seem evil but when joined in harmony with all others the final outcome is eternal good. This harmony is not at all unreasonable. Did not God give a harmony to His first creation in which everything fits a purpose? Should we think that God would fail in doing the same in the new creation?

5. *The result of this providence*—“*for good.*” The word “good” does not necessarily mean that the event in itself is intrinsically good, but that its effect is both useful and helpful. Therefore, troubles do not hinder or deter Christians, but rather hasten their final purpose.

God moves in mysterious ways
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

6. *The principle of this providence*—“*To them that love God and are called according to His purpose.*” Here is the human side of providence—“to them that love God” and the divine side—“called according to His purpose.”

All of this is assured by the greatness of God who is behind it all. God’s purpose began in an act of divine knowledge—“for whom he foreknew.” It proceeded through foreordination to calling to justifying and finally to glorifying. The point is simple. If God can plan from eternity to eternity, surely He would have no problem working in my life His good.

The Assurance Of Salvation—verses 31-39. Five questions dominate this section. They proceed from the basic thought found in verse 31, "If God be for us."

1. *Who shall oppose us? Verses 31-32.* This is our *protection*. God has established both a precedent and a proportion. The precedent is in *what He gave*. Having given Christ in crucifixion for our sins, He will surely give with Him all the necessary means of grace for our security. The proportion is in *how He gave*, i.e. completely and unreservedly. So will He give to us.

2. *Who shall accuse us?—Verse 33.* This is our *perfection* no one can do so successfully for two reasons: (1) He would be dealing with "God's elect;" (2) His accusation would have to be made to the one who has already justified the accused—God. Such an accusation would be foolish and vain.

3. *Who shall condemn us?—Verse 34.* This is our *vindication*. Our case can not be reopened. God has already ruled in our favor. This is true for four reasons: (1) Christ's death—final and sufficient; (2) Christ's resurrection—proof of sufficiency; (3) Christ's ascension—present place a throne not a tomb; (4) Christ's intercession—He also pleads for us.

4. *Who shall separate us?—Verses 35-36.* This is our *security*. We see now a man of triumph standing upon the summit of the heaped-up adversities and complexities of life. With his head bared to the heavens, he is uttering a never-to-be-forgotten cry. Hear him "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

5. *Who can defeat us?—Verses 37-39.* This is our *victory*. We are victorious over the *world around us*—"Neither death nor life." We are victorious over the *world above us*—"nor angels nor principalities." Nothing in the area of *time* can defeat us—"nor things present nor things to come." We will

win over all governments—"nor powers." In short nothing *physical* can harm us—"nor height, nor depth, nor any creature."

But there is a prescribed sphere wherein this inseparable love operates—"in Christ Jesus our Lord." Meeting this condition, we will enter into that significant place of security and blessing which adds divine joy and blessing to our lives.

This concept of freedom in Christ is illustrated over and over again in the Old Testament. For instance, in Leviticus 14 we read of the ceremonial cleansing of the leper. Two birds were taken. One was killed over clean or running water. The second, whose leg had been tied to a hyssop branch, is plunged into the blood of the dead bird and then he is set free to fly into freedom. The first bird in his captive state would represent the eternal Word becoming flesh; in his clean state would represent the sinlessness of Christ; and in his death would represent the defenseless way in which Jesus died.

The second bird in this text would represent you and me. In order to be set free that bird had to be dipped in the blood of the first. So, you and I must be plunged into the blood (i.e. death) of Christ before freedom is ours. Sin is such an outrage on God's universe that nothing but blood can atone for it. What was sprinkled on the door-post in Egypt? Blood! What flowed from thousands of sacrifices on many altars? Blood! What gave the High Priest access into the Holy of Holies? Blood! What makes the robes of the righteous white? Blood! The blood of Jesus cleanses from all defilement.

Let the water and the blood,
From thy side a healing flood,
Be of sin the double cure.
Save from earth and make me pure.

But notice that as soon as that bird was dipped in the blood, the priest untied it and set it free. It now can go where it pleases; do what it desires, rests where it will. It can eat grain from any field. It can drink from any stream. It was free—free of wing and free of foot. It was a type of our souls when we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. We can go where we will. We can do what we will. We are free! Should I qualify that? I dare not! For you see, conversion changes the will! The state of "in Christ" is the state of emancipation. The grace of God has yanked the cell-door from its hinges; strikes the shackles from our feet, knocks the handcuffs from our hands, and opens the door into a country aglow with beauty and abloom with flowers where the light is God and the Lamb which can only be called "heavenly places." It is freedom.

Have you ever seen two stormclouds approach each other? As they come nearer and nearer you can hear them begin to speak to each other—Boom! Boom!—thunder to thunder. They illustrate the arguments with lightning flashes! The storm breaks. The rain comes down in torrents and in front of your house, where a moment ago there was only dirt and dust, now flows a veritable Jordan of water. I see gathering here in front of us two stormclouds—one from Sinai and one from Golgotha. Hear them respond to each other? Sinai thunders, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" Calvary responds, "God commendeth His own love toward us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." Sinai cries, "Woe, Woe!" Golgotha answers, "Mercy! Mercy!" The clouds burst and once where there were only despair and death there flows at our feet a river bed with the blood of Jesus. And when our souls are plunged into that river we go free—FREE!

In the days of slavery an old black man, a gospel preacher, stood to be auctioned. He was aged and worthless as a farm hand. He had saved seventy dollars and expected with that to

buy his freedom. "What am I bid," cried the auctioneer, "He's a very good man. He's a minister." Some one said, "Ten dollars—twenty—thirty—forty—fifty—sixty—sixty-five." The old man cried in desperation, "Seventy dollars." Everyone saw what he was doing. "Sold," immediately cried the auctioneer.

Poorer than that old African could ever be were you and I. The voices of doom were bidding for us. But Jesus came and said, "I will bid for him my Bethlehem manger; my hunger in the wilderness, my sermon on the mount, my fainting heart, my bleeding body, my wounds, my death, yes, and my resurrection." "It is enough," cries God from His throne, "I accept His sacrifice." The purchase complete, it is done.

The great transaction is done
I am the Lord's, and He is mine.
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

Notice that once this bird was loosed it flew heavenward. What else are wings for? Those who have been washed in the blood of Christ start heavenward! Storms of bereavement and trouble will contest your flight but God will bring you through. Build not on the earth. This is a perishing world! Its flowers fade. Its beauties fail. Its promises cheat. You have been set free from such foolishness. Heaven is your home. Set out straight toward it. Until, finally, around God's throne, we sing eternally the song we sang in life.

FREE AT LAST! FREE AT LAST! THANK GOD AL-
MIGHTY! FREE AT LAST!

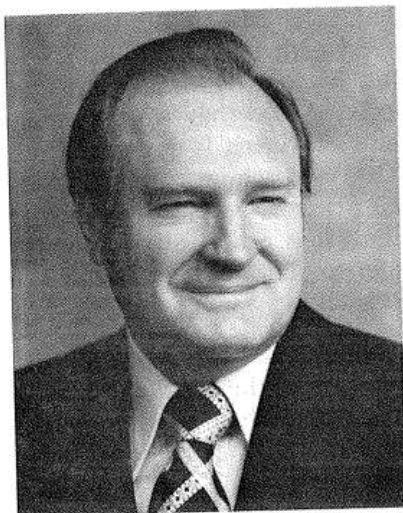
Exegesis of Difficult Passages

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

AS SEEN IN ACTS 2:38 AND OTHER PASSAGES

ALONZO D. WELCH

Alonzo D. Welch was born in Hickory Flat, Mississippi, May 17, 1918. He is a graduate of David Lipscomb College, Pepperdine University, and the University of Mississippi and is a former member of the faculty of the University of Mississippi and David Lipscomb College.



Brother Welch has served as regular minister for congregations in California, Tennessee, Florida and Mississippi. He has appeared on numerous college lectureships and university religious emphasis programs. During the past twelve years he has served as President and Superintendent of Sunnybrook Children's Home, which he helped to establish. He is also Executive Director of the Mississippi Christian Foundation.

He was married to Katherine Netterville in 1942. They have three children and four grandchildren.

The plurality found in the Godhead and the variety of functions attributed to each member do not justify the

absolute mechanical separation of the Trinity into three independent personalities. The sharing of their work and interests as necessitated by the indivisibility of their purpose and being reveals their essential interdependence. When God proposed the creation of man He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). The names to be worn by Christ, as prophesied by Isaiah, included "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," and "Immanuel," which means "God with us" (Isa. 9:6; 7:14). John describes the "Word" that became flesh as a prime mover in the creation and declared that the "word was God" (Jno. 1:1, 2, 14). Likewise, the Holy Spirit is designated as the "Spirit of God" and the "God" to whom Ananias lied in the misrepresentation of the price he received for his land (I Cor. 2:11; Acts 5:3, 4). Thus, it is practically impossible for an informed student to refer to one member of the Trinity without thinking of God Himself.

What has been said concerning the agency function of members of the Godhead may be observed also in the spatial concepts of their existence. Although Heaven is depicted as the seat of divine authority and the place where the power and presence of God are localized, these attributes are diffused into other areas of space. Speaking for God, Isaiah said, "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool" (Isaiah 66:1). The writer of the 139th Psalm considered several possible avenues of escape from the presence of God and found them closed. Heaven, Sheol, the remote areas of the sea, and even darkness could not expel the penetrating Spirit of God. But there is a sense in which the general presence of the members of the Godhead is extended and enhanced by their special residence in specified places. For instance, Jesus received the Holy Spirit as His baptism and thereafter was declared to be "full of the Spirit" and to be "led by the Spirit" (Luke 4:1). Since "God was in Christ reconciling the world

unto himself" (II Cor. 5:19), the three members of the Trinity were present and participating in the life and ministry of Jesus. Christ alluded to His ultimate departure as going to the Father (Jno. 16:10); yet He said while still on the earth, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me" (Jno. 16:32). One might ask: how does one go away to a person with whom he is already associated? Again, Jesus promised His disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit, who would guide them into all truth (John 16:1-3). However, the prospect of a future advent of the Spirit was presented by the Son of God, in whom the Spirit of God was dwelling at the time the promise was made. He was also promised to a group of men who possessed the power of healing and inspiration usually attributed to the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:1), and upon whom Jesus later breathed and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (Jno. 20:22). In effect, He was saying that he who is here is going to come again, not necessarily to the same places and for the same purposes which marked his previous visits, but for the accomplishment of the plan of God in history. The intermingling of the work and presence of the members of the Trinity exhibits their basic unity and demonstrates that both the immanence and transcendence of God are recognized and fully exploited without any discernable suspicion of inconsistency.

In fulfillment of prophesy, the day of Pentecost was ushered in by a most spectacular display of the illimitable power of God. This eruption of the supernatural heralded "the beginning" of a new era that was marked intermittently by the extraordinary manifestation of powers for approximately seventy years. These demonstrations were so varied that they almost elude the search for uniformity and equality. If, in reference to the Holy Spirit, we resort to the usual categories of baptismal measure, laying on of hands measure and the indwelling measure, we still fail to account for the disparities which are found especially within the first two classifications,

though we concede that they have some validity. For instance, Peter equates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius with the "life gift" which fell upon the apostles "at the beginning" (Acts 11: 17, 16). Both are said to have "received the Holy Spirit" and it came upon the latter "as" it did upon the former (Acts 10:47; Acts 11:15). Both experiences were apparently in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that God would pour forth of His Spirit upon all flesh as an indication that He makes no distinction among races (Acts 15:8, 9). Yet it must be admitted that the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not qualify the household of Cornelius for apostleship, nor did it bestow upon them the power to confer gifts of the Holy Spirit upon others. Thus the blessings received by Cornelius were more restricted than those given on Pentecost. It follows, therefore, that what is alleged to be the same measure of the Spirit did not produce equal results each time it was employed. This is also true of the "laying on of hands measure." The gifts bestowed varied with the recipients and were unequal in spiritual quality or merit. Paul said that the Roman Christians had gifts differing according to the grace that was given to them (Rom. 12:6) and informed the Corinthians that "there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit" (I Cor. 12:31).

As in the case of Jesus Christ, it must not be assumed that the Holy Spirit was spun off from God by a tornadic wind on an independent course or mission. The message which He transmitted to the apostles, for instance, was not indigenous, but was derived from God the Father for He was to speak "what things soever he shall hear" (Jno. 16:13). Peter credits Jesus with pouring forth on the day of Pentecost that which was heard and seen (Acts 2:33). By quoting Psalms 68:18, Paul identifies Christ as the giver of Gifts who "gave some to be apostles; and some prophets, and some pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:8-11).

Likewise, in I Cor. 12:28, he says that "God" hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then powers, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." The writer of Hebrews also names God as the efficient cause of the works of confirmation which accompanied the message of salvation when he wrote; "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Heb 2:4). Thus, the will of God was the administrator of the manifestation of the extraordinary powers which inaugurated and characterized the history of the church of the first century. This not only affirms the cooperation and participation of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit in these momentous events, but it explains why it is difficult to find a stereotyped pattern of the function of the Holy Spirit and the working of the power of God in the life of the early church. It was directed by the flexible will of God who was capable of meeting every contingency from the death of Dorcas to the incarceration of Paul and Silas. There were times when it was restricted and times when it was unleashed, occasions when it was articulate and periods when it was quiescent, but always and in every case it was subject to the will of God.

The visible and audible manifestations of the powers of God in the first century were temporary expedients that were intended to assist the church in its establishment and infancy and eventually give way to a more permanent arrangement. The contrast presented by Paul in I Cor. 13 graphically and explicitly sets forth this truth. He wrote as follows: "Love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:8-10). Historically, this prophecy of Paul has been

fulfilled and the will of God has withdrawn from His people the power to speak in tongues, to prophesy and to display other like gifts of the Spirit. He who claims such for our time not only contradicts the authority of Scripture but he stands in opposition to the realities of human experience.

It must be noted, however, that Paul was contrasting the temporary with the permanent. Since the period of the transient elements extended long enough for the full development of the enduring substance of our religion, we must search for the permanent in the context of the temporary. This essential task has perhaps been man's greatest spiritual challenge and the cause of his greatest frustration and failure.

Our search for the permanent in this paper is confined to Acts 2:38 with special emphasis on the "Gift of the Holy Spirit." It will be recalled that after the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, Peter preached the first gospel sermon recorded in the Christian era. In it he explained the unusual events on that day as being the work of God in fulfillment of prophecy and directed attention to Jesus of Nazareth, who, though approved of God, was slain by the hands of ruthless and lawless men. Apparent annihilation was transformed into an impressive victory epitomized by the resurrection and ascension of Jesus to God's right hand. God not only placed the Holy Spirit at the disposal of Christ, but He had prophetically declared that Jesus would occupy the favored place at His right hand until the enemies of the Savior were reduced to a footstool. Having been convicted of sin, righteousness and judgment, many of his auditors earnestly inquired of Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do? and Peter said unto them, Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37, 38). The inquiry made by those disturbed and guilt-ridden Jews

focused on a possible remedy for their spiritual plight; so we would naturally expect Peter, who possessed the keys of the kingdom, to give a reply which would not only gratify their needs, but provide a remedy that would be universal in its scope and applicability. If Peter's answer was keyed to the question, as we have every right to believe that it was, these people were in need of two things to rectify their situation, namely, the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The first is stated as the purpose of repentance and baptism, and the second is a promise conditioned upon the same requirements. Since the two results of obedience to the gospel are related inextricably to the same conditions, we should expect them to follow compliance whenever and wherever this occurs. The terms of admission into the kingdom of God as initially announced by Peter on Pentecost, as well as the stated consequence thereof, should become normative for the entire Christian era. To declare any part of his answer transitory or an interim blessing is to cloak the remainder in a cloud of uncertainty. Peter rules out the possibility that he was speaking of any temporary expedient when he puts the stamp of permanence on his answer with the following words: "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him" (Acts 2:39). What, then, we ask, is the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38? The grammatical construction in the Greek taken abstractly is indecisive (TEN DOREAN TOU HAGIOU PNEUMATOS). The word gift is in the accusative case, the object of the word receive. "Holy Spirit" is in the genitive case which offers two possibilities, namely, the subjective genitive and the appositive genitive. The first of these would mean "something which the Spirit gives" and the second, "the gift which consists in the Holy Spirit."

Some have argued strenuously that it is contrary to the nature of the genitive case and Greek syntax to apply the

appositive genitive to Acts 2:38 as an alternate and necessary construction. While we appreciate the strength of their conviction, we question the accuracy of their scholarship. Blass and Debrunner, authors of *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, assert that "the division of the genitive into objective, subjective, etc., is really only an attempt to set off several special types among the manifold possibilities of the general function of the adnominal genitive which is to denote relationship."¹ They have illustrated the ambiguity which often arises in the New Testament use of the genitive case by explaining that AGAPE TOU THEOU (love of God) can be either subjective, that is, God's love for man, or objective, the love man has for God.² In discussing the appositive genitive they point out that it conforms in the New Testament to classical usage. To illustrate its use they refer to 2 Cor. 5:5 (TON ARRABONA TOU PNEUMATOS), "the earnest of the Spirit" which, they say, is the appositive genitive and means "the guarantee (earnest) which consists in the Spirit."³ Nigel Turner, author of the third volume of Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, in speaking of the appositive genitive, says that "This genitive represents more than the adjective; it represents a second noun in apposition to the first, or indicates the material of which the first noun consists. It conforms to classical and Koine usage but is incidentally Hebraic." Among the illustrations given are: the sign of Jonah or the sign which was Jonah, Matt. 12:39; a grain of mustard seed or a grain consisting of mustard seed, Mk. 4:31; a great herd of swine or "a herd consisting of swine," Mk. 5:4; a cup of water or "a cup containing water," Mk. 5:11; *the gift of the Holy Spirit* or "*the gift which is the Spirit*," Acts 2:38; The sign of circumcision or the sign which is circumcision, Rom. 4:11; the earnest of the Spirit or "the guarantee consisting of the Spirit," 2 Cor. 5:5.⁴

It is a grave mistake in exegetical procedure to compare one genitive construction which is consistently subjective with

another which has not been so restricted by the Holy Spirit. This has been done with dubious results in regard to the phrases, "the gift of God" and the "gift of the Holy Spirit." God, the Father, has not represented himself in Scripture as giving himself personally unto men, but He has given His Holy Spirit unto men on numerous occasions. Hence, according to the basic principles of theology, the expression "gift of the Holy Spirit" may be construed to mean the gift which consists in the Holy Spirit." Not only is this a grammatical and scriptural possibility, but the Holy Spirit has authorized its use and certified its interpretation in the tenth chapter of Acts. Luke reports in verse 45 that the Jews who accompanied Peter to the household of Cornelius were astonished "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter states in verse 47 that they "received the Holy Spirit," and again in Acts 11:15, while offering an explanation in Jerusalem of what happened on that historic occasion, he says "the Holy Spirit fell on them." The gift of the Holy Spirit in this passage, therefore, is beyond any reasonable doubt the Holy Spirit as a gift. It is obvious that the gifts promised in Acts 2:38 and that received by the Gentiles were different in measure and manifestation, but the fact is clearly demonstrated that New Testament Greek is susceptible of the construction of the appositive genitive when the expression "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is used.

It is no accident, therefore, that the weight of scholarship agrees with the interpretation that "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38 means "the gift which consists of the Holy Spirit." In his exposition of this passage, Lenski says, "and you shall receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit means in and by repenting and being baptized. The genitive is appositional; as in verse 33 the promise is the Holy Spirit, so here the gift is the Holy Spirit."⁵ Commenting upon the meaning of DOREA (gift) in New Testament usage, Vine says that it denotes a free

gift, stressing its gratuitous character; it is always used in the New Testament of a spiritual or supernatural gift.—In Acts 2:38, “the gift of the Holy Ghost,” the clause is epexegetical, the gift being the Holy Ghost Himself.”⁶ In their discussion of the same word, Arndt and Gingrich construe its use in Acts 2:38 to mean “receive the Spirit as a gift.”⁷ *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, agrees with the foregoing authorities when it declares that “In Acts the Spirit is called the DOREA of God in Acts 2:38.”⁸ Thayer corroborates the foregoing authorities with his comment that gift in Acts 2:38 is used “with an epexegetical genitive of the thing given, viz, TOU AGIOU PNEUMATOS.”⁹ The learned J. W. McGarvey concurs with the foremost of New Testament scholars in the following statement taken from his monumental *Commentary On Acts Of Apostles*:

The second blessing promised on condition of repentance and baptism, is the “gift of the Holy Spirit.” By this is not meant that miraculous gift which had just been bestowed upon the apostles; for we know from the subsequent history that this gift was not bestowed on all who repented and were baptized, but on only a few brethren of prominence in the several congregations. The expression meant the Holy Spirit as a gift; and the reference is to that indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and without which we are not of Christ.¹⁰

Having shown that Acts 2:38 is susceptible of the appositional construction and having pointed out that leading New Testament scholars concur in this conclusion and interpret it as having this meaning, let us turn to contextual considerations to further determine its specific import. The simplest way to discover the actual content of any promise is to

look at its fulfillment. Speaking before the Jewish Council in defense of their evangelistic activity, Peter presented a brief sketch of the gospel and said, as recorded in Acts 5:32, "and we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey him." It is noteworthy that Peter refers to himself and the other apostles by the pronoun *we*, but when he reveals the scope of the conferment of the Holy Spirit he employs the pronoun *them* and says that God has given the Holy Spirit "to them that obey Him." The condition precedent to the reception of the Spirit is *obedience* to God. This obedience refers to specific acts that occurred at a particular juncture in the past life of those who possessed the Holy Spirit. A parallel situation is found in regard to remission of sins. Paul states that the Roman saints were freed from sin by obedience "to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered" (Rom. 6:17). Peter² declares that the elect of God had purified their souls in "obedience to the truth" (I Pet. 1:22). From these passages we learn that obedience was the condition upon which remission of sins was granted unto those who possessed salvation. Thus, the Holy Spirit and remission of sins were given on the same condition, namely, obedience. Peter gives us the specific content of obedience when he announced the universal terms of the plan of salvation on Pentecost in Acts 2:38. Since remission of sins and the Holy Spirit were both given on the condition of *obedience* and since the remission of sins was granted as a result of repentance and baptism, preceded of course by faith, it follows that the Holy Spirit was also given on the same terms, for there is no other framework of past obedience to which the reception of this blessing can be related. Therefore the appositional genitive, that is, the gift consisting of the Holy Spirit, is the only construction which may be put on the promise of Acts 2:38 that accords with its fulfillment.

This conclusion is strengthened by the scriptural requirement that Christian sonship be authenticated by the literal

indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a gift from God. The concepts of possession and indwelling are concurrent and conjunctive in New Testament teaching. Paul clearly avers in the Galatian epistle that man becomes the possession of Christ at baptism. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ—and if ye are Christ's (CHRISTOU-genitive of possession), then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29). In the Roman epistle, Paul reasons that the indwelling of the Spirit of God is so indispensably a part of them that are in Christ that it is a major distinctive possession which determines whether a man is "in the flesh" or "in the Spirit," and with unequivocal finality Paul says "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"—(HOUTOS OUK ESTIN AUTOU—literally, he is not of Him) (Rom. 8:9). The Spirit of Christ is identified in the context as the Spirit of God. Inasmuch as one becomes the possession of Christ at baptism and since one cannot truly belong to Christ without the Spirit of God dwelling in him, it forcefully and irrefutably follows that the Holy Spirit himself must be received when one is baptized; otherwise his sonship is not certified and validated. It is true that the gift of the Holy Spirit is spoken of in Acts 2:38 in successive terms, but the immediacy of its fulfillment in relation to forgiveness of sins gives it the effect of simultaneity. The essentiality of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to the life and identity of the Christian tolerates no appreciable delay between remission of sins and the reception of the Spirit of God. Only in the light of this fundamental truth could Paul have written the following words emphasizing possession and indwelling as coterminous and complementary concepts.

"And because ye are sons, God sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying abba Father" (Gal. 4:6). "In whom [Christ] ye also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom having also believed, ye were sealed

with the Holy Spirit of promise which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13, 14).

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11).

According to the foregoing statements, the Holy Spirit himself dwells in every child of God as a "seal," a trademark, a sign of God's possession and also as an assurance, or as Thayer says, "a foretaste and pledge of future blessedness."¹¹ A distinction must be drawn between identification indwelling and the extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Spirit. As previously shown, the indwelling of the Spirit is co-extensive with sonship; since sonship survives the age of the temporary elements of Christianity, actual indwelling also survives as an identifiable part of the mature age of the church. Thus, the reply of Peter on Pentecost which included the promise of the gift which consists of the Holy Spirit is as applicable today as when it was first presented.

It is through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that the church functions as the house of God and as the temple of God. In Eph. 2:22 Paul says that Christians "are builded together for a habitation of God." The word habitation means "dwelling place" or a place where one resides. This accords with Old Testament prophecy quoted by Paul in II Cor. 6:16 as follows: "And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." Paul explains how God dwells in His temple, the church, and also declares it to be a holy and sanctified residence in I Cor. 3:16-17 which reads as follows:

“Know ye not that ye are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.” By way of further explanation, he shows in I Cor. 6:19-20 that God dwells in the corporate temple by dwelling in each member of the body as is required by the fundamental nature of the church which is a multiple organism. “Or know ye not,” he asks, “that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.” There are three indisputable facts set out by Paul here. First, the physical body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Second, the Holy Spirit dwells in this temple, not just outside, upon or under it. Third, the Holy Spirit was received into the physical body of the Christian from God.

Now, if the spiritual phenomenon of the indwelling spirit were a temporary expedient that did not survive the age of supernatural manifestations, God has withdrawn His Spirit from His dwelling place, and such expressions as temple of God, house of God and habitation of God become archaic expressions. It is evident that the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit were destined by divine fiat to cease, but inspired Scripture is devoid of any implication that the Holy Spirit would abandon his temple to alien forces.

Two decades ago during the anti-legalism debate, the writer observed that liberalism is not the antidote to legalism. Today, let it be said with the same decisiveness that naturalism is not the antidote to Pentecostalism.

1. F. Blass and A. Bebrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 90.

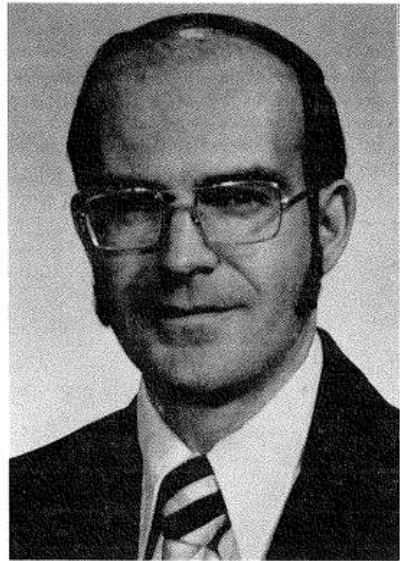
2. Ibid, p. 90.
3. Ibid, p. 92.
4. J. H. Moulton, Nigel Turner, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. III (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1963), p. 214.
5. R.C.H. Lenski, *The Acts Of The Apostles* (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., 1934), p. 109.
6. W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words* (Fleming H. Revell Co., O.d Tappan, N.J., 1940), p. 147
7. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (The University of Chicago Press, 1957) p. 209.
8. Gerhard Kittel, ed, *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*, Vol. II (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1964), p. 167.
9. Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (American Book Company, New York, N.Y., 1886), p. 161.
10. J. W. McGarvey, *New Commentary On Acts Of Apostles*, Vol. I (Gospel Light Publishing Co., Delight, Ark., 1892), p. 39.
11. Thayer, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

"THAT WHICH IS PERFECT"

I Corinthians 13:10

CARROLL D. OSBURN

Carroll D. Osburn, after graduation from Harding College (1963), received the M.Th. (1968) and M.A. (1969) from Harding Graduate School of Religion. In 1970 he received the D.Div. in Bible translation from Vanderbilt University and in 1974 the Ph.D. in New Testament textual criticism from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.



Beginning in 1961, he served as minister in Rector and Palestine, Arkansas, Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee, and Kirkcaldy, Scotland. Since 1973 he has been Assistant Professor of Greek and New Testament at the Harding Graduate School of Religion, and frequently speaks on various college and university campuses.

Carroll has assisted in the translation of the New Testament into the Papago Indian language (Arizona); Zuni Indians (New Mexico); Quiche, Cakchiquel, and Aguacateco Indians (Guatemala); and several primitive tribes in the headwaters of the Amazon in Peru. His articles have been published in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* and *New Testament Studies*, as well as in *Firm Foundation* and *Contact*.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Osburn, Forrest City, Arkansas, he is married to the former Linda Carol Moore, and they are the parents of two daughters, Heather Denise and Valerie Michelle.

The *crux interpretum* of I Corinthians 13:10 has been characterized succinctly by Jean Hering as follows (translation and italics mine):—“So prophecies and tongues will be abolished. *When and how?*”¹ Although various postulations as to the referent of *to teleion* in v. 10 have appeared in the history of Christian thought, the resultant array of widely divergent views should not be regarded as a Gordian knot which must be cut, but rather as a perplexing nest which needs to be untangled. With reference to the seemingly ambiguous usage of the term *teleios* in this text, it must be noted at the outset that any confusion is clearly ours rather than Paul’s. Accordingly the main lines of ancient and recent interpretation of these verses need to be set forth for reassessment, and a fresh analysis made of the text in its literary and historical context.

ANCIENT AND RECENT INTERPRETATION OF I CORINTHIANS 13:10

Although a thoroughgoing compilation of the available data on this interesting text would be most useful,² we shall demur, in this essay, the larger task and limit ourselves to principal interpretations as expressed in representative writers. In extant ante-Nicene literature, the remains of what must have been a much larger literature and very influential in its day, there is no attempt made at an exegesis *per se* of these verses, although they are used periodically. Irenaeus (d. 202), for instance, in *Adv. Haer.*, II, xxviii, 7-8,³ cites v. 9 twice, taking *ek merous* as “while we are upon the earth,” to drive a heresiological wedge between unorthodox thinkers such as Valentinus, Ptolemaeus, and Basilides who purportedly claim

“perfect knowledge” and the more orthodox, such as himself, who argue that perfect knowledge belongs to the Father only. In *Adv. Haer.*, IV, ix, 2,⁴ strong controversial pressure to emphasize the unity of the Old and New Covenants, Irenaeus cites vv. 9-10, drawing upon the distinction between *ek merous* and *to teleion*, but specifying no precise referent for either term.⁵ However, Clement of Alexandria (fl. 194), *Quis dives salvetur?*, XXXVIII,⁶ in discussing the more excellent way of “love,” cites I Corinthians 13:4-8, 13, and notes (italics mine) that “faith departs when we are convinced by vision, *by seeing God*. And hope vanishes when the things hoped for come. But love comes to completion, and grows more when *to telion* has been bestowed.”

Similarly, Origen (d. 248), *Contra Celsum*, VI, xx,⁷ cites v. 10 in connection with “then face to face” of v. 12, clearly taking *to teleion* to be heaven itself, in an obvious attempt to prove that the things which are *eternal* (i.e., cognizable by the mind, but not seen; in contrast to the *temporal* which is seen) can be known only *ek merous* while upon the earth, but upon reaching the highest heavens (*pros akrois tois ouranois*; which he bases upon John 14:3 “that where I go, you may be also”) we “shall be ever engaged in the contemplation of the invisible things of God, which are no longer understood by us through the things which He has made from the creation of the world, but . . . ‘then face to face’; and in these words, ‘when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away.’” Interestingly, though, in his *In Matthaeum*, X, ix,⁸ in discussion of Matthew 13, Origen equates Christ with the pearl of great price and cites vv. 9-10, taking *ek merous* as the partial knowledge of the “childhood” faith and *to teleion* to be the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ” (Philippians 3:8), “which upon its coming does away with that which is *ek merous*.” Continuing this usage, Origen cites v. 10 again in *In Matt.*, XII, vi,⁹ where the context (5-7; esp. 5a) makes clear

that *to teleion* is the true insight into Jesus' own teaching; yet, “all our faith here is little faith” seems to imply a conflation of both usages. Origen, *On Prayer*, XXV, 2,¹⁰ clearly takes *to teleion* to be the afterlife, however, and cites” “when all enemies have been subjected to him” (I Corinthians 15: 23-28) in this regard. Continuing this usage, Methodius (d. 311), *Symposium*, IX, ii,¹¹ notes that although truth now has come through Christ and the shadows and figures of the Old Covenant have ceased, nevertheless we still know *ek merous* “since that which is perfect has not yet come to us; namely the kingdom of heaven and the resurrection, when ‘that which is in part shall be done away.’”

Hegemonius,¹² sometime between 325 and 348,¹³ arguing from a decidedly polemical rather than exegetical stance, attributes to Manes in section 15 the boastful claim that although the apostle Paul knew and prophesied only *ek merous*, Manes saw himself as the Paraclete who, as the *perfect one* of I Corinthians 13:10, would do away with that which is partial.¹⁴ Then in section 41 arguing against this “claim,” Hegemonius notes that the Holy Spirit knows all kinds of languages and understands all things, as in Acts 2:6, where “every man heard the apostles speak in his own language through the Spirit, the Paraclete,” and plainly states that such work of the Spirit “is not, in this life at least, held out on the same terms to any person in times subsequent to the apostle’s, and if the opposite ever appears to be the case, the person can only be held to be a false prophet or a false Christ.”¹⁵ Hegemonius then cites vv. 9-10 and asks, since the Paraclete was in Paul, how Manes could presume to call *himself* the Paraclete. Then citing vv. 8-10, Hegemonius asks what prophecy Manes has done away with, or what tongue he has caused to cease, or what alien dogma he has destroyed, and then notes, “my Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truly perfect one,” at his coming will destroy all the prophecies, languages,

and teachings of this world, for “none of all these things will be able to endure the advent of that mighty king.”¹⁶

In the East in the fourth century, Eusebius (d. 340), *Commentaria in Psalmos*, XLIV, xiv,¹⁷ cited vv. 9-10, and specifically took *to teleion* to be “whenever the heavenly (or celestial) sphere” comes. Meletius (fl. 390) also cited verses 9-10, but gave no precise referent to *to teleion*.¹⁸ In the West, Ambrosiaster (fl. 390), *Commentaria in Epist. ad Corinthios Primam.*, XIII,¹⁹ in commenting on vv. 9-10, specifies no referent of *to teleion*, but clearly notes that only God has the power to embrace every human language, implying His realm to be *to teleion*.

In Alexandria in the fourth century, Athanasius (d. 373), *Epistolae Heortasticae*, XI,²⁰ basing his thoughts on II Corinthians 12:4, cites vv. 9 and 12 in conflation, taking *ek merous* as “upon the earth” and *to teleion*, by implication, as “heavenly places,” and in this usage is followed by Didymus of Alexandria (d. 394), *De Trinitate*, III, xli,²¹ who cites vv. 8-12 in argument against the Montanists, and plainly states the coming of *to teleion* to be “after the resurrection.”

In fourth century Cappadocia, the view that *to teleion* is to be taken as “heavenly places” is followed by Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 390), *Theologica Secunda*, oration XXVIII,²² and by Basil the Great (d. 379), *Epistolarum Classis Secunda*, CCXXXIII, ii,²³ who notes specifically that (italics mine) if a mind has “yielded to the aid of the Spirit it will have understanding of the truth, and will know God. But it will know Him, as the Apostle says, ‘in part,’ and *in the life to come more perfectly*. For ‘When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.’” Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394), probably the most erudite of the great Cappadocian writers, in his *De Anima et Resurrectione*,²⁴ alludes

to I Corinthians 13:8-13 in a discussion of the priority of love, and implies the referent of *to teleion* to be *agape*, in distinction to prophecies, etc., which are *ek merous*.

Nowhere during the fourth century is the prevailing view that “heaven” is meant by *to teleion* in v. 10 more clearly stated than by the notorious heresiologist, Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403), who wrote, “as the holy Apostle said, ‘We know in part and we prophesy in part; when *to teleion* comes, that which is in part shall be done away.’ But the holy Apostle did not refer to the Paraclete, . . . but he related this concerning the two worlds, the present one and the coming one.”²⁵ The ensuing discussion denotes the “coming world” as “heaven,” and, as is characteristic of these early writers, “then face to face” of v. 12 is cited in this regard.

At the beginning of the fifth century, John Chrysostom (d. 407), *Homiliae in I Epistles ad Corinthios 13:8*,²⁶ makes no specific mention of the referent of *to teleion* in his discussion of v. 10. Although in the immediately preceding context, he notes with reference to v. 8 that prophecies and tongues “were brought in order to (establish) the (Christian) faith; when that is sown abroad everywhere, the use of these (spiritual gifts) is henceforth superfluous,” and asserts that in that period “loving one another shall not cease, rather it shall advance even further,” he carries the essentiality of love even beyond this life when he states, “both here and hereafter, and then more than now. For here there are many things that hinder our love, . . . but there none of these.” Chrysostom thus appears to allude to two aspects of *to teleion*: 1) the maturity of the church with the demise of spiritual gifts, and 2; the hereafter. However, in his *In Matthaenum*, homily XVI, 5,²⁷ Chrysostom specifically takes *to teleion* to be the hereafter when he notes that although the Old Covenant was imperfect when compared with the New Covenant, one’s knowledge of

the New Covenant itself, "when compared with that which is to come, is a sort of partial and imperfect thing, and is done away on the coming of that other. 'For when,' says he, 'that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away': even as it befell the old law through the new."²⁸

Jerome (d. 420), *Contra Joannem Hierosolymitanum ad Pammachium*, IX,²⁹ cites v. 9, taking *ek merous* as "upon the earth," and in *Dialogue Contra Pelagianos*, III, 12,³⁰ cites vv. 9-10, taking *to teleion* as "seeing God in the hereafter." In *Dial. Contra Pelag*, I, 15,³¹ arguing that there are two sorts of perfection mentioned in Scripture, cites vv. 9-10, 12 to illustrate the difference between perfection which must be measured by God (*i.e.*, *to teleion*) and that which is within the range of man.

Augustine (d. 430), in *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, xviii,³² quotes "we know in part," taking *ek merous* as "while we are absent from the Lord" (II Corinthians 5:6). In XXII, xxix, he cites vv. 9-10 as explanation for his inability to thoroughly describe the immortal life to be lived in the eternal presence of the Father, and with reference to that presence he writes, "For then shall be 'that which is perfect,' of which the Apostle says, 'We know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.'"³³ Having neither the linguistic competence or the disposition to ground his theological understandings in proper grammatical and historical Biblical exposition, Augustine has an interesting usage of vv. 8-10 in his *De Doctrina Christiana*, I, xxxix,³⁴ when he states that this text was already fulfilled in his day by those individuals who walk in faith, hope, and love, and who therefore do not need the Scriptures except to instruct others. Aside from this instance, however, Augustine's interpretation of *to teleion* in v. 10 is that of the afterlife.

Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) does not treat 13:8-10 in his *In Epistolam I ad Corinthios*, but in *De Adoratione et Cultu in Spiritu et Veritate*, XI,³⁵ notes that imperfection will be done away after the resurrection when, no longer in bodily form, the corruptible has passed away, and states that this may have been what Paul meant in I Cor. 13:8-10.

John Cassian, whose fifth-century writings exerted considerable influence on Western monasticism and remained popular during the Middle Ages, wrote in his *Collatio Prima: Quae est prima abbatibus Moysis*, XI,³⁶ that according to v. 8 the temporary gifts will pass away when the “dispensation is ended,” but that love will continue in the “world to come,” thus taking by implication *to teleion* to be heaven.

In the East, John of Damascus (fl. 730), *De Fide Orthodoxa*, IV, xxiii,³⁷ in discussing v. 10, takes *to teleion* to be “the perfect rest of human nature, by which I mean the day, after the resurrection, on which the Lord Jesus, . . . shall lead us into the heritage promised to those who serve God.” This usage, aside from the interesting use of I Cor. 13:8-10 by Photius (d. 891) in the *filioque* controversy,³⁸ was the principal view in Byzantine writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries, such as Pseudo-Oecumenius, *Comment. in Epist. I ad Corinth.*, XIII, 8-10,³⁹ and Theophylact, *Expositio in Epist. I ad Cor.*⁴⁰

In the West, Thomas Aquinas, writing in the thirteenth century in his *Summa Theologica*,⁴¹ employs the text in his discussion of “unformed” and “formed” faith in unique fashion. Aquinas, being the dogmatist he was, sought and therefore found the doctrines of mediaeval Christianity expressed in Paul’s writings, and made Scripture fit into the scholastic framework. Thomas a Kempis (d. 1471), however, reacting strongly against such technical theological scholasti-

cism in his *Imitation of Christ*, IV, xi,⁴² continues the traditional view that *to teleion* in v. 10 refers to the afterlife. Martin Luther, *First Lectures on the Psalms*,⁴³ on Ps. 72:7, cites v. 10 with reference to the future perfection of the church after the resurrection, and in *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John*⁴⁴ he cites v. 9 to prove that "in this life" all is imperfect, and that perfection will occur "in eternity after this life."

Thomas Muntzer, in a counter-reformation sermon delivered at Allstedt on 13 July 1524 and directed primarily against Martin Luther,⁴⁵ alludes to *to teleion* in I Cor. 13:8-12, not in the traditional sense of eschatological fulfillment, but rather as a stage in the mystical experience of the present day, a view not altogether unlike that Augustinian oddity in *De Doctrina Christiana*, I, xxxix, or that of the current charismatic movement. The traditional interpretation of v. 10 surfaces again in John Calvin (d. 1564), who contrasts *to teleion* with *ek merous* and notes, "but when will that perfection come? It begins, indeed, at death . . . but it will not be completely manifested until the day of judgement."⁴⁶ Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, in the apparatus to the third edition of his Greek New Testament,⁴⁷ likewise took *to teleion* in contrast to *ek merous*, and noted that time to be "when all will see God in person."

Even though certain earlier writers such as Maximus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, as well as later writers such as Nicolaus de Lyra, Valla, Peter Martyr, Melancthon, Estius, Grotius, and the British reformers, are not included in this survey, the overwhelming majority of ancient writers unhesitatingly prefer the second coming of Christ or the afterlife as the referent of *to teleion* in v. 10. Indeed, this view has remained dominant from the rise of nineteenth century German liberalism until the present.⁴⁸ Although most of these writers make no distinction between the second coming

of Christ and heaven itself as the referent of *to teleion*, some, influenced by millenarian thought, prefer to speak instead of “the dispensation” or the parousia.⁴⁹ Those advocating that “heaven” or the “second coming of Christ” is meant by *to teleion* have generally held that the spiritual gifts passed away at the end of the apostolic period; however, some argue forcefully that the gifts remain until the second coming.⁵⁰ The traditional view of v. 10 is not without complications, though; as it introduces a rather harsh transition from the previous exposition of agape to a study of eschatological matters, and those who have espoused it have generally failed adequately to account for various contextual considerations.

Rejecting the traditional view, some have restated in more modern idiom the old view of Gregory of Nyssa (which, I am inclined to think, was akin to Origen, *In Matt.*), that “love” is meant by *to teleion*.⁵¹ Although his view has much to commend it, critics have responded that if *to teleion* is to be taken as “love,” one would rather expect the feminine form, agreeing with *agape* (as in I John 4:18 “*he teleia agape*” or Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans*, X, 2, “*he teleia elpis*”), rather than the neuter.

Likewise rejecting the traditional view, John McRay⁵² appeals to the Eph. 4:7-16 parallel with I Cor. 12-14 and takes *to teleion* to be “the inclusion of the Gentiles.” The linking of I Cor. 12-14 and Eph. 4:7-16 is nothing novel, for these texts are found together in the earliest patristic literature. What is unique to McRay’s thesis is his contention that “the analysis of I Corinthians 12-14 must be made on the basis of the entire argument of Ephesians.”⁵³ Obviously there are literary points of contact between the two passages; however, it is the conclusion of this writer that McRay’s view of I Cor. 13:10 does not adequately consider the total context of I Corinthians, nor does it properly relate *to teleion* in v. 10 to that

context, and hence suffers from the same weakness he attaches to other views, *viz.* that it imposes a meaning on *to teleion* that the context does not warrant.

It has been asserted by others that *to teleion* in v. 10 refers to the completed canon of Sacred Writings. David Lipscomb, for instance, in his commentary on I Corinthians,⁵⁴ cited this text to prove that spiritual gifts ceased at the close of the apostolic period, and may well have been influenced to this view of *to teleion* by A. R. Fausset,⁵⁵ who notes, "A primary fulfillment took place when the Church attained its maturity; then 'tongues ceased,' and 'prophecyings' and 'knowledge,' as *supernatural* gifts were superseded, as no longer required, when the Scriptures of the New Testament had been collected together."⁵⁶ The precise origin of this view is uncertain.⁵⁷ Although it would not be surprising to find it attested in early patristic literature when matters of canonicity were being discussed with vigor,⁵⁸ the present writer has not been able to locate it prior to nineteenth century Britain.⁵⁹ Although it is true that through the inspired Scriptures "the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17), there are indeed problems with taking *to teleion* here as "completed canon." For one thing, the canon of the Scriptures is not under consideration in the context of I Corinthians, nor in James 1:25 or Romans 12:2 which are often cited in support of the "completed canon" view. In these latter texts, the "perfect law of liberty" and the "perfect will of God" were already at work when those passages were written and must not be misconstrued as the "coming canon." Also, this view involves an imprecise reckoning with the relatively time-consuming process of canonicity; a point J. W. Roberts was quick to recognize.⁶⁰

One needs to investigate the central issues of the text with which he is concerned, yet a text cannot be dealt with

adequately in isolation. Accordingly, the present writer was prompted to consider the history of interpretation of I Cor. 13:10. What may appear at first sight as an inordinately long assessment of the history of interpretation of this verse is important, for several significant observations surface there: 1) while v. 8 has commonly been taken with reference to this life, v. 10 has been most often understood in terms of “face to face” in v. 12; 2) contextual considerations have been neglected often in the exegesis of this text; and 3) the text is frequently linked with Philippians 3 and Ephesians 4 from an early period.

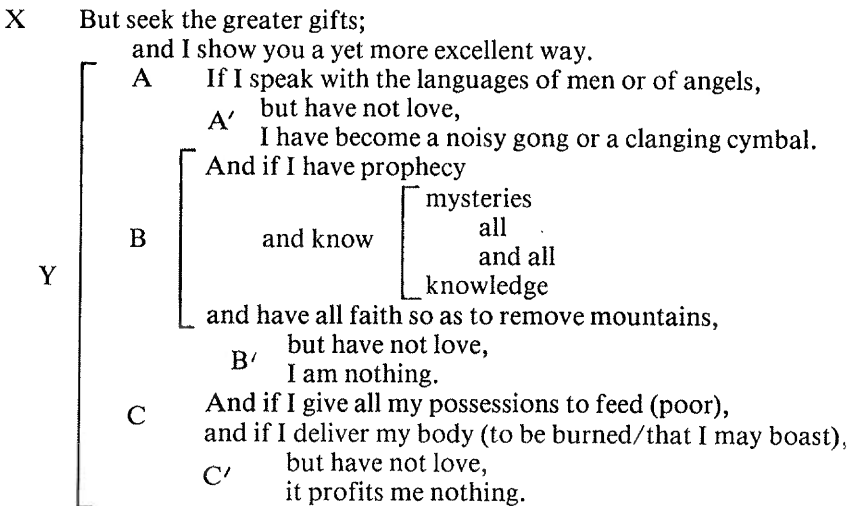
Credible Biblical exegesis is the attempt to ascertain the historical meaning of the text, in its historical and literary context, and to this we now turn.

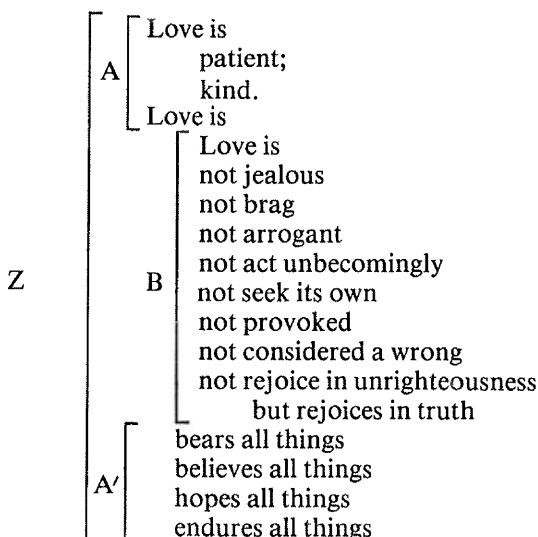
IN ITS LITERARY AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT I CORINTHIANS 13:10

I Corinthians 13 is not a hymn, as it is often thought to be.⁶¹ Johannes Weiss⁶² and Adolf Harnack⁶³ correctly viewed the chapter as rhetorical rather than hymnic, and Ceslas Spicq⁶⁴ has properly analyzed these verses to be a “paraenetic exhortation.” Although some have viewed 13:1-3 as a hymn⁶⁵ or a Stoic-Christian diatribe⁶⁶ added to the text at a later date, and others have asserted that chapter 13 must be explained by itself,⁶⁷ the current general consensus is to accept the Pauline authenticity of the entire chapter and to stress that its interpretation must be carefully related to chapters 12 and 14⁶⁸ yet hermeneutical propriety necessitates v. 10 be understood against the background of the Corinthian correspondence as a whole, and especially with regard to the entirety of I Corinthians. It is imperative that it be recognized at the outset that in I Cor. 13:10 Paul is not

treating some abstract teaching spawned by the quiet musings of an academic study, but is dealing rather with an actual situation of serious dimensions in the Corinthian congregation. ⁶⁹

That I Corinthians 13 is closely connected in form and content with chapters 12 and 14, and that the exhortations in 12:31 and 14:1 are intimately related to one another, seems apparent. The division of 13:1-13 into three sections of a) vv. 1-3; b) vv. 4-7; c) vv. 8-13, is generally accepted, with the exception of certain problems with v. 13,⁷⁰ to which we will return shortly. The chiasmic form of these verses has been analyzed according to linguistic principles by Nils Lund,⁷¹ from whom the following graphic arrangement of the text is adapted:





A Love never fails;
 B But if prophecy, they will be done away;
 if languages, they will cease;
 if knowledge, it will be done away.
 For we know in part,
 and we prophesy in part;
 C But when *to teleion* comes,
 the partial will be done away.
 D When I was a child,
 I spoke as a child,
 I thought as a child,
 I reasoned as a child;
 When I became a man,
 I put away childish things.
 For now we see in a mirror dimly,
 But then face to face;

Y'

	C'	Now I know in part, But then I shall know fully just as also I have been fully known.					
	B'	But now remain	<table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">faith,</td> <td rowspan="3" style="padding: 0 10px;">] these three;</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">hope,</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">love,</td> </tr> </table>	faith,] these three;	hope,	love,
faith,] these three;						
hope,							
love,							
A'	But the greatest of these is love.						
X'	<table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">Pursue love,</td> <td rowspan="2" style="padding: 0 10px;">] Yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">Yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.</td> </tr> </table>			Pursue love,] Yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.	Yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.	
Pursue love,] Yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.						
Yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts.							

The major thrust of the evident parallelism in vv. 1-3 is that there is a limit to human achievement, including spiritual gifts, because all human activity becomes vain and disintegrates in the presence of *love* if one has not become one with it.⁷² It is *agape* which gives value to all human activity.⁷³ including the ultimate altruistic sacrifice of one's self⁷⁴ for whatever purpose.⁷⁵ Verses 4-7 depict *agape* as the basis of Christian existence,⁷⁶ and clearly express the antithesis to everything that is the essence of *natural* man. Often the question has arisen as to whether the love referred to here is love to God or love to man, But Ethelbert Stauffer⁷⁷ has correctly observed that this alternative is unproductive, and notes that what is meant is *agape* as the basic power of the Christian Way. The impressive symmetrical progression through fifteen verbs in these four verses elucidates the persevering totality of *agape*,⁷⁸ and culminates in v. 7 where the all-embracing power of love is expressed and the section closed by the explicit four-fold repetition of *panta*.⁷⁹ The positive expressions in vv. 4a and 7 separate the eight negative elements; thus the persistent patience and goodness of love is clearly seen against the background of what it is not.⁸⁰

The third section of the chapter (vv. 8-13), a chiasmic arrangement of seven parts, should be treated as a counter-

part to vv. 1-3, as both sections compare *love* with spiritual gifts in order to demonstrate the excellence (12:31b) of love. In the first sentence of v. 8, *piptei* is to be read (with S* ABC* *et al*) rather than *ekpiptei* (with D E F G K L P *et al*) as the latter has every appearance of being a scribal alteration. There has been considerable debate, however, as to whether this sentence is to be taken with v. 7 as the conclusion to the previous section⁸¹ or whether it goes with the following section as its beginning. Stylistic and grammatical considerations seem to indicate the sentence to be the beginning of a new section. For instance, if v. 8a goes with the preceding section, there is no demonstrable reason for the *de* in 8b, and in 8a there is no particle which could establish a relationship between vv. 7 and 8.⁸² Evidently *he agape* in v. 8 is similar in usage to *he agape* in v. 4 in that it introduces a new section. Too, vv. 4-7 constitute a literary unit of well-defined dimensions, as the *panta* formula in v. 7 brings the section to a close much as it does in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.⁸³ Also, Lund's demonstration of the chiasmic relationship of 8a with the following material, especially 13b, remains cogent.⁸⁴

The abiding nature of love is then contrasted with the temporary nature of three spiritual gifts: prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. Although the role of prophet has been characteristically complex, the prophets of the New Testament regularly predict future events.⁸⁵ Paul is not speaking of different prophecies at this point, rather of the gift of prophecy, as in 13:2. This spiritual gift, he notes, will be done away. *Katargethesontai* is a precise antithesis to the preceding *oudepote piptei*.

In the neo-Pentecostal movement of the past two decades, many discussions of “tongues” have assumed that the Greek term *glossa* includes ecstatic utterance, with the result that the very strong evidence for understanding *glossa* in the New

Testament to refer exclusively to an *intelligible* foreign language (except in those places where it obviously refers to the physical tongue) has been unfortunately overlooked. Pentecostalists contend, as do certain non-Pentecostalists, that Paul, in I Cor. 12-14, has reference to ecstatic unintelligible utterances.⁸⁶ It is claimed by some, for instance, that Paul's reference in 13:1 to the "tongues of men and angels" suggest that *glossa* means an angelic or heavenly language which Paul spoke.⁸⁷ However, nowhere does Paul assert that he spoke such an angelic language (note the "if"!). Furthermore, the use of *glossa* in this verse actually assumes the intelligibility and usefulness of these *glossa* as languages. I Cor. 14:18 says nothing about an angelic language.⁸⁸

I Cor. 14:2 is often presumed by charismatics to refer to ecstatic utterance, but a careful reading of this verse in its wider context suggests that here Paul means that the value of speaking in another language is limited to the speaker's own emotions if that which is spoken remains untranslated. neither the speaker nor the listeners would understand (note verses 9 and 14). It is for this reason that in verse 13 Paul urges the speaker of another language to pray for the ability to translate what he says. When no one is present in the assembly who can translate that language for the listeners, the "tongues-speaker" is to remain silent (14:28). That which makes the *glossa* unintelligible is not the ecstatic nature of the utterance, but the absence of an interpreter (note 12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 27-28). It should be clear, even to a casual reader, that in 14:8-11 Paul has reference to the miraculous speaking of unstudied and unlearned human languages. Consequently, Paul says in verse 13 that one who speaks in another language should pray that he may be able to translate what he says.

On the day of Pentecost translators were unnecessary because of the cosmopolitan nature of the audience (Acts 2:4-11). As these men of God spoke (Arabic, Latin, Coptic,

etc.) by the power of the Spirit, each listener heard of the mighty works of God in his native language. In Corinth, however, where the majority spoke Greek, one speaking another language without translation would appear to be speaking gibberish (I Cor. 14:6-12, 16-18, 23, 27). The term *diemeneuo* is used regularly by Hellenistic writers such as Polybius and Philo to mean "translate" or "interpret," as it is in Acts 9:36 (. . . Tabitha, which is *translated* Dorcas), and normally refers to the translation of intelligible languages. It is used in Luke 24:27 with reference to "interpreting" or "explaining" the meaning of prophecies. Although Arndt and Gingrich, in their translation of the old Bauer lexicon (p. 193), do allow that "translate" may be possible for the uses of this term in I Cor. 12-14 their contention that *diemeneuo* in these passages refers to the interpreting of *ecstatic speech* is a modern invention best forgotten. The preferable term for rendering *diemeneuo* in all its occurrences in I Cor. 12-14, as well as in Acts 9:36, is "translate," and should be taken to refer to intelligible languages.

In Acts 2:5-11 Luke clearly intends *glossa* to refer to the speaking of foreign languages.⁸⁹ It is interesting that Johannes Behm⁹⁰ correctly observes that in Acts 2:5-11 *glossa* refers to an intelligible language, but he contends that the use of *glossa* in Acts 2:4 can be explained only in terms of I Cor. 12-14, which he erroneously assumes to be "ecstatic utterance." In my opinion, however, Acts 2:4 is best understood in terms of verses 5-11 which follow. The term *dialektos*, from which we derive our word "dialect," is used in verse 8 and clarifies *glossa* in verse 11. Credible exegesis necessitates contextual consideration.

Arndt and Gingrich apparently follow the same faulty reasoning as Behm when in their lexicon on p. 315 on *heteros* they hold that *glossa* in Acts 2:4 may mean either "speak in

other tongues" or "in foreign languages." They further assert on p. 161 that *glossa* in I Cor. 12-14 undoubtedly refers to "the broken speech of persons in religious ecstasy." Now there can be no doubt that in Hellenistic religion, as elsewhere in the ancient near East, there was an ecstatic phenomenon which has been well documented.⁹¹ However, with the rise of European higher criticism during the past century and a half, there has been a prevalent tendency by such scholars as Bleek, Reitzenstein, Bousset, Behm, and Bultmann to understand the New Testament almost exclusively in terms of a Hellenistic background. This unfortunately means that from time to time a lexical entry is written more on the basis of the assumptions and conclusions of recent critics with regard to Hellenistic syncretism than on the basis of solid philological evidence of ancient word usage, especially in New Testament contexts. Such is the case with *glossa* in Arndt and Gingrich and *TDNT* with reference to Acts 2 and I Corinthians 12-14. This is to argue that their contention that *glossa* in these passages can and does refer to "ecstatic utterances" involves less than adequate discernment in accepting certain tendentious conclusions of European higher criticism.

Indeed, church history is replete with examples of those who have mistakenly read into the New Testament the conviction that glossolalia is the certain sign of the presence of the Spirit, and that "speaking in tongues" is the *sine qua non* of Christian spirituality. On the other hand, those who have been correctly concerned about the possibilities for heresy inherent in such a position have been led at times to an opposing point of view which is contrary to Biblical usage. For instance, to argue that tongue speaking in Corinth was fraudulent and not real⁹² is to create difficulties rather than to resolve them. J. W. Roberts has correctly noted that "tongue speaking" was the miraculous speaking of a foreign language one did not already know,⁹³ and Paul's comment simply means that this special ability will run its course and cease.

Paul writes further that “knowledge will be done away,” and from early patristic times it has been rightly observed that knowledge *per se* is evidently not what is intended by the term at this point. The plural *gnoseis* of S A F G and a few other witnesses is a corruption of the original *gnosis* in p 46 B D K L and most manuscripts, and originated in an effort to harmonize the term with the preceding plurals. *Gnosis* has here the same meaning as in 13:2, 12:8; and 1:5, 7, *viz.*, a special kind of knowledge, a spiritual gift designed for the immediate situation in Corinth, in which the Corinthian Christians were prone to take undue pride (8:1f).⁹⁴ Even this special knowledge is to be done away, and the passive form of *katargein* used to describe this cessation means “will be rendered inactive, inoperative.” The cessation of miraculous speaking of foreign languages, however, is described as *pausontai*, future middle in form of *pauo*, meaning simply “will cease.” Generally the only difference between the middle and passive forms of *pauo* is that the former denotes a willing cessation, whereas the latter indicates a forced termination.

In v. 9 the reading *gar* in the sense of “for” in p 46 S A B D E F G P and others is preferable to *de*, meaning “but,” in most Byzantine witnesses, as Paul evidently wishes to explain the rationale for this cessation. *Ek merous* in both occurrences in v. 9 means that human activity, even if given by way of a special gift, is incomplete. This prepositional phrase does not imply a partial knowledge or a partial prophecy so much as it denotes that the knowing and prophesying itself is imperfect.⁹⁵ The clear implication is that when the zenith is reached these special gifts will no longer have *raison d’etre*.

Now, in v. 10 Paul further explains why the gifts by their very nature must be conceived as temporary by writing “but when *to teleion* comes, *to ek merous* will be done away,” and the verb to describe this cessation is once again *katargethese-tai* as in v. 8. From early patristic times it has been the

prevailing practice to understand v. 8 with reference to the current situation in the Corinthian church, but to take v. 10 in the light of eschatological completion, which is commonly seen in the (vision of God in heaven) "face to face" in v. 12.⁹⁶ This understanding, however, creates a tension not only between the three sections of chapter 13 and between chapter 13 and 12/14, but also between 13:8 and 13:12. If, then, by *teleion* Paul means something other than eschatological completion in this verse, what is it? *Teleios* has a wide range of possible meanings,⁹⁷ and the neuter adjective with the article must take its precise meaning from the context. Here, in contrast to *ek merous*, *to teleion* means not "perfection," but "totality, maturity," with specific reference to the maturity of the Corinthian Christians in terms of *agape*.

It has been observed by some that "maturity" or "love" could not be meant here because of the neuter article, but this argument has no basis in fact. In Greek literature, the neuter is used at times with reference to *persons* if it is not the individuals but a general quality that is to be emphasized,⁹⁸ and especially the *neuter singular adjective* is used to denote a plurality of elements which are in union.⁹⁹ In this usage, the article does not function merely as a definite article to distinguish *a* from *the*, but functions idiomatically before the adjective to express what would otherwise have to be expressed by a relative clause or by a noun.¹⁰⁰ As A. T. Robertson¹⁰¹ has correctly noted, the use of the neuter singular in a construction such as this, rather than being a breach of gender, is perfectly normal Greek usage. In I Cor. 13:10, the protasis (. . . *to teleion*) and the apodosis (*to ek merous*. . .) refer to the same thing, the positive explaining the negative. When the Corinthian Christians mature in the Christian Way, the gifts such as prophecy and special knowledge will be done away and the ability to speak languages they have not learned will cease. There remains no need for these special gifts when

the dynamic of Christian proclamation proceeds from a solid base of mature Christian faith and life.¹⁰² Such maturation is expressed in this chapter in terms of the general quality of *agape*.

Then, in V. 11 Paul introduces a three-fold illustration of v. 10. The first illustration is that of contrast between childish and mature actions, and the illustration was suggested by the preceding *to teleion*, but actually evoked, in the estimation of the present writer, by the tension between *teleios* and *nepios* in 2:6 and 3:1,¹⁰³ which motif continues on throughout the epistle. There Paul indicated that although he wished to speak wisdom to mature Christians, he could not, for the Corinthian congregation was altogether too “this worldly” in mind-set. In 2:14-16 Paul noted that the *psuchikos*,¹⁰⁴ or natural person, could not receive the things of God, for those things are *spiritually* grasped. Spiritual things are foolishness to him. However, the spiritually minded, or *pneumatikos*, individual can receive the things of God. Paul’s observation that the fleshly mind-set, *sarkikos* (3:1), of the Corinthians precludes their becoming *teleios* (2:6; 13:10) is not a judgement of their reversion to paganism, but simply to their inadequate putting off of the “old man” and putting on of the “new man.” That encroaching worldliness which was later to assume such a prominent role in the epistles of Titus, I Peter, Jude, and the epistles of John, had its inception in such isolated instances as this one at Corinth. Paul does not speak of them, however, as “enemies of the cross,” but as “babes in Christ” (3:1). The remainder of the epistle, for the most part, is a compelling treatment of specific problems which had been brought to Paul’s attention that brought havoc to the congregation with whom he had labored for so long, and to do so with the perspective of developing them from *nepios* into *teleios* persons. The view sometimes asserted that *elaloun* in v. 11 is an allusion to “knowledge”¹⁰⁵ goes too far.¹⁰⁶ Apparently all

that Paul intends in this triad is that not only does the mature person lay aside *the things* of the child, but that he has *brought that period of life to a close*. The verb used to denote this cessation of childishness is the same term, *katargein*, used in vv. 8 and 10 to denote the cessation of the spiritual gifts (!). The tense, *katergeka*, is perfect and infers that childhood has been put away in a mature man with thoroughness and with finality.

The second contrast between *to ek merous* and *to teleion* occurs in v. 12 when Paul asserts that "now we see by means of a mirror indistinctly, but then face to face." The *gar* confirms the previous illustration. This verse has been understood consistently in eschatological terms from an early period; yet it is precisely this unproven assumption that "face to face" means "face to face *with God*" that hinders exegesis. Paul does not specify the precise meaning of *then*, nor does he say specifically with whom the Corinthians are to be "face to face." Although a thorough-going exegesis of I Cor. 13:12 is beyond the scope of the present essay, it may be mentioned that 1) *blepomen* has no expressed object; 2) the present tense indicates that the activity expressed by the verb occurs "now," and that what is now seen will be seen "face to face" later on; 3) *arti*, the adverb meaning "now" underscores the *nowness* of the illustration; 4) "through a mirror" does not refer to a glass window, but to a polished metal mirror¹⁰⁷; 5) *en ainigmati* (the opposite of "clearly") is introduced to bring out the idea of imperfection¹⁰⁸; and 6) "face to face" is a Hebrew idiom with relative meaning¹⁰⁹. To see by means of a mirror is not as clear as when "face to face"; the seeing "now" is *ek merous*, imperfect, "childish," when contrasted with seeing "face to face."¹¹⁰ It appears that when Paul refers to *blepein* face to face, he does not allude to a vision of God directly or immediately, but about a Christian *blepein* of the true Christian Way, no longer obscured by *sarkikos*—a transition of the

psuchikos person of 2:14 into the *pneumatikos* individual of 2:15, or, to employ a basis motif in this epistle, a transition from *nepios* (3:1; 13:11) to *teleios* (2:6; 13:10).

The third illustration of v. 10 is in v. 12b, “now I know *ek merous*, but then I will know fully just as also I have been fully known.” *Ginoskein* is the counterpart of the preceding *blepein*, as the repetition of the corresponding *arti* and *tote* clearly indicate. *Ginoskein*, present in tense, indicates an activity which occurs “now,” but it, too, has no object. Now, in view of Gal. 4:9, the supplied object “God” would be understandable; but the actual situation is that Paul did not say we “know God now,” but only we “know now.” A lengthy discussion of *gnosis* or *ginoskein* is outside the scope of this essay, but as a partial conclusion it may be noted that this *ginoskein* “now” corresponds to an *epiginoskein* “then.” This verb varies in its usage,¹¹¹ but in this series of illustrations of the point in v. 10, is an intensification of *ginoskein*, and is another way to say “then we will see face to face.” There will be “then” a deeper and clearer *gnosis*.

The *arti* and *tote* in v. 12 are correlative terms which must be defined, not on *a priori* assumptions, but upon a particular context. In I Cor. 13:10-12 there are four pairs of correlative, the last three of which illustrate the first: 1) to *ek merous*/to *teleion* (v. 10); 2) to be a child/to be a man (v. 11); 3) to see indistinctly/to see clearly (v. 12a); and 4) to know partially/to know more fully (v. 12b). Each set of correlatives expresses the development of the Christian life from “childhood (3:1; 13:11) to “maturity” (*teleios*; 2:6; 13:10). In I Cor. 14:20, a Christian can be a *pais* (child) or a *teleios* (mature person), and with regard to “evil” one is to be a “child,” while with regard to matters of “understanding” one is to become *teleios*. The *nepios/teleios* motif adopted by Paul in 2:6-3:1, which runs through the epistle to 14:20, clearly implies that the childish

stage precedes the mature stage (cf. the particle *eti* in I Cor. 3:2-3). It is evident that both the childhood and the mature stages "in Christ" occur in the Corinthian congregation on earth. This accords with Phil. 3:15 where Paul refers to *teleioi*, or adults, here and now, and with Eph. 4:15 and Col. 1:28. This development from "a child in Christ" to "a man in Christ" happens not only with a church as a whole, but with individuals who comprise the church. When v. 12 is seen, along with v. 11, as illustrative of the point in v. 10, the meaning is obvious: rather than an unnecessary eschatological reference or a hypothetical reference, the contrast between the child and the mature person describes an actual historical situation among the Corinthian Christians. When such an individual "grows up in Christ," his childishness has been done away, and he now acts, thinks, and reasons like a mature Christian.

It is just here that the polemical aspect of Paul's thought evidences itself. That Paul does not specifically mention "tongues" at the obvious place to do so in v. 11 is a gracious way to permit his childish brethren in Corinth to draw their own conclusions as to the real value of tongues, which they so zealously coveted for themselves in a childish manner (3:1; 14:20). It is interesting to note that at this point Paul's polemic *evidences* the very brotherly love of which he speaks in this chapter. The spiritual gifts have become the cause of divisions (1:10f; 12:25; etc.), and Paul notes in chapters 12-14 that though the gifts are good, they are destined to terminate at Corinth, and further that they do not, in fact, express a mature Christianity. They represent the *arti* and childhood of the Corinthian congregation, which Paul hopes will mature, not only in the content of their faith, but in the expression of that faith within the congregation. When that maturity, expressed in terms of *agape* from 13:1, arrives (*tote*), the spiritual gifts will be done away.

I Cor. 13:13 has been especially perplexing to exegetes. Generally *menei* has been contrasted with *piptei* in 13:8 and given a future meaning. However, *menei* is present in tense, not future, and structurally is contrasted with *katargein* in v. 8 rather than with *piptei*. The singular is not a breach of grammar, for when a verb occurs in the third person in an introductory manner, it is often used in the singular, even though the subject may be in the plural.¹¹² Although some have taken the *nuni de*, “but now,” in a temporal sense,¹¹³ others have rightly assessed it to be logical in force.¹¹⁴ “Now” merely introduces the sentence. Whereas spiritual gifts will be done away, certain things remain—faith, hope, and love. The greatest of these is *agape*, and this is the more excellent way of 12:31b. The connection of 12:31 to 14:1 is made, not by removing the thirteenth chapter to another location or treating it as a separate block of material with Weiss, Sanders, *et al*, but by grasping the essential nature of the chapter, which clearly is to set before the Corinthian congregation a viable alternative to the divisiveness and childishness rampant among them. When they mature to the point that they consider the ultimate well-being of the other person to be the dominant factor in any interpersonal relationship, when they mature in *agape*, childishness will be done away. Then, and only then, will they be able to rise above the *psuchikos* or *sarkikos* life-style and reach a *pneumatikos* mind-set.

I Corinthians 13 is permeated from v. 1 to v. 13 with a single contrast that remains central in all its variations, and that contrast is between *nepios* and *teleios*. There is no section in the entire epistle where Paul expressed so pointedly and convincingly what he had to object to in the Corinthian Christians. That contrast is expressed clearly in v. 10, which this study concludes meant that when the Corinthian Christians *matured in love*, the reason for the spiritual gifts,

which they so childishly sought, would cease to exist. This view coheres with its immediate context (vv. 8-13), and with the larger units in which it occurs (ch. 13; chs. 12-14). It fits well with the material from chapters 12-16,¹¹⁵ and indeed, within the entire epistle, especially from 2:6/3:1 to 14:20 (and cf. also II Cor. 1:13-14 for the continuation of the theme).

The church of today is far removed from ancient Corinth, yet the present writer cannot but sense that Paul's directive to those people penetrates to ourselves. In our efforts to grow from *neos* into *teleios* Christians, Paul's injunction to "pursue love" (14:1) provides the essential perspective. As he said elsewhere, "the fruit of the Spirit is love . . .

1 *La premiere Epitre de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (Paris: Delachaux and Niestle, 1949), p. 120.

2 The *Centre d'Analyse et de Documentation patristiques* in Strasbourg is in the process of making available for scholarly investigation all the Biblical citations in patristic texts up to Photius (d. 891). Cf. J. Duplacy, "Reports Appel et Propositions aux Patrologues et aux Biblistes pour un Inventaire General des Citations patristiques de la Bible Grecque," *New Testament Studies*, XVII (1970), pp. 116-119.

3 J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graece* (Turnholt: Brepols, n.d.), VII, cols. 810-811.

4 *Ibid.*, col. 998.

5 Reading *maturescere profectum salutis* in IV, ix, 2, with W. W. Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1857), II, p. 171, against *profectum* of R. Massuet, *Sancti Irenaei* (Paris: 1712; repr. by Migne, *P.G.*, VII, col. 998), who takes the phrase with the preceding *sicut igitur adveniente profecto*. However, as *profectus* occurs in the immediately following text with an evident reference to and comparison with this clause, it may be suggested that the original text read *profectum*, and that the referent of *to teleion* in sect. 2 has nothing to do with this clause in sect. 3.

6 Otto Stahlin, *Clemens Alexandrinus in Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1909), XVII, pp. 184.

7 Paul Koetschau, *Origenes Werke* in *GCS* (1899), II, p. 91.

8 *Commentaire sur l'Evangile selon Matthieu* in *Sources chretiennes* (tr. R. Girod; Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1970), CLXII, p. 174.

9 *P.G.*, XIII, col. 990.

10 *GCS*, II, p. 358. Cf. also *Comm. on John*, X, 43; XX, 34; and cat. X in Erwin Preuschen, *GCS* (1903), X, pp. 222, 372, and 493.

11 G. N. Bonwetsch, *Methodius* in *GCS*, XXVII, p. 116. Cf. also F. Diekamp, “Über den Bischofsitz des hl. Martyrers und Kirchenvaters Methodius,” *Theologische Quartalschrift*, (1928), pp. 285-308.

12 Cf. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1966), III, pp. 357-358, who follows Heraclion of Chalcedon in attributing the *Acta Archelai* to Hegemonius rather than to Archelaus of Charchar.

13 Cf. the use of *homoousios* in chap. 36 for the *terminus a quo* in C. H. Beeson, *Hegemonius: Acta Archelai* in *GCS* (1906), XVI, p. 52, and the *terminus ad quem* in a quotation from memory by Cyril of Jerusalem of a portion of the text in his *Catechesis*, VI, xxxf.

14 Beeson, *Hegemonius*, p. 24. Cf. also the heresiological argument found later in Augustine’s *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, XV, vi, and XXXII, xvii, where much the same use of the text was made against Manes; but cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 66, 61, in Karl Holl, *Epiphanius* in *GCS*, XXXVIII, p. 98, for another view. Cf. also Hippolytus (fl. 220), *Refutation of All Heresies*, in Paul Wendland, *Hippolytus Werke* in *GCS*, XXVI, p. 231, for earlier use of the text against Docetics in general.

15 Beeson, *Hegemonius*, p. 60.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *P.G.*, XXIII, col. 404.

18 Cf. Holl, *Epiphanius* in *GCS*, XXXVII, pp. 307-308.

19 *P.L.*, XVII, col. 253.

20 *P.G.*, XXVI, col. 1404.

21 *P.G.*, XXXIX, cols. 984-985.

22 *P.G.*, XXXVI, col. 52. Cf. also A. J. Mason, *The Five Theological Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), p. 51.

23 *P.G.*, XXXII, col. 868.

24 *P.G.*, XLVI, col. 96.

25 *Panarion*, 66, 61; cf. Holl, *GCS*, XXXVII, pp. 98-99. In this refutation of Manes, Epiphanius obviously reacts against the use made of vv. 8-10 by Hegemonius, *et al.* in their reaction against that heresy, and it is interesting to note that by the ninth century Photius, *Contra Manichaeos* in *P.G.*, CII, cols. 1-264, does not use I Cor. 13:8-10 at all against the Manichaeans.

26 *P.G.*, LXI, col. 287.

27 *P.G.*, LVII, col. 244.

28 Cf. a similar usage of I Cor. 13:9-12 in Chrysostom’s *In Epist. ad Ephes.*, Hom XI, in Migne, *P.G.*, LXII, col. 83. Also, in his Homily XXXIX on I Cor. 15:24-26 on “all things under his feet,” Chrysostom notes that “to perfect his kingdom” is to “put an end to death.”

29 *P.L.*, XXIII, col. 378.

30 *Ibid.*, col. 609.

31 *Ibid.*, col. 531.

32 in *Corpus Christianorum* (Turnbolt: Brepols, 1955), XLVIII, p. 685. Cf. also *On the Gospel of John*, Tractate LXXXVI, 1, in *Corpus Christianorum*, XXXVI, p. 541; Tractate XCVI, 4, *ibid.*, p. 572; and *De consensu evangelistarum*, IV, x, 20, in *P.L.*, XXXIV, col. 1228; where vv. 9-10 are cited with obvious reference to heaven.

33 in *Corpus Christianorum*, XLVIII, p. 857. Augustine employs vv. 8-10 in *De Perfectione Iustitiae Hominis*, 19, in *P.L.*, XLIV, col. 300; and in *Contra Duae Epistolas Pelagianorum*, IV, 31, in *P.L.*, XLIV, col. 635, and in both places specifically notes the referent of *to teleion* to be that perfect state in the afterlife when one shall live with no sin.

- 34 in *Corpus Christianorum*, XXXII (1962), p. 31.
- 35 *P.G.*, LXVIII, col. 764.
- 36 *P.L.*, XLIX, col. 496. Cf. also Cassian's citation of v. 8 in *Collatio XI—De Perfectione*, XII, in *ibid.*, col. 865, in a discussion of perfection, esp. col. 864.
- 37 *P.G.*, XCIV, col. 1205.
- 38 *P.G.*, CIII, cols. 764-765; 773-789.
- 39 *P.G.*, CXVIII, col. 837.
- 40 *P.G.*, CXXIV, col. 732.
- 41 Quaestio IV, Articulus IV, in *Divi Thomae Aquinatis* (Romae: ex Typographia Senatus, 886), III, p. 60.
- 42 *The Imitation of Christ* (revised translation; New York: Grossett and Dunlap, n.d.), p. 278.
- 43 *Luther's Works*, ed. J. Pilikan (trans. by H.J.A. Bouman; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), vol. X, p. 411.
- 44 *Luther's Works*, ed. J. Pilikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), vol. XXIV, pp. 400-401.
- 45 *Sermon Before the Princes in Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), Vol. XXV, p. 60.
- 46 *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (trans. from the Latin and collated with the French by John Pringle; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), I, p. 428.
- 47 *Novum Testamentum* (Geneva: Henricus Stephanus, 1589), p. 150.
- 48 Cf. among others, J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament* (2nd ed. rev. by A. R. Fausset; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1859), p. 306; Adam Clarke, *The New Testament* (new ed.; Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, n.d.), p. 270; Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament* (rev. ed.; New York: Harper and Bros., 1837), p. 273; James Macknight, *Apostolical Epistles* (London: Longman, 1821), p. 219; Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Carter, 1858), p. 272; Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958; repr. of 7th ed.), II, p. 588; T. S. Evans, "I Corinthians," *The Speaker's Commentary* (London: John Murray, 1881), p. 341; H.A.W. Meyer, *Kritisch Exegetisches Handbuch über den ersten Brief an die Korinther* (4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1861), p. 314; Hermann Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament* (tr. from Germ. by A. Kendrick; New York: Sheldon Blakeman and Co., 1857), IV, p. 354; J. A. Beet, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians* (6th ed.; New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1882), p. 235; C. F. Kling, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians in Lange's Commentary* (trans from 2nd Germ. ed. by D. W. Poor; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), p. 271; A. P. Stanley, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (4th ed.; London: John Murray, 1876), p. 234; T. C. Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (3rd ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), p. 349; J. W. McGarvey and P. Y. Pendleton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians in The Standard Bible Commentary* (Cincinnati: Standard, n.d.), p. 132; F. Godet, *Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (trans. from Fr. by A. Cusin; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), p. 252; J. J. Lias, *First Epistle to the Corinthians in Cambridge Greek Testament* (Cambridge: University Press, 1889), p. 149; Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief in KEK* (9th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1910), p. 318; G. G. Findlay, *St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians in The Expositor's Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), p. 900; A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians in ICC* (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), p. 297; R. St. John Parry, *Corinthians in Cambridge Greek*

Testament (2nd ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1926), p. 194; H. L. Goudge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (5th ed.; London: Methuen, 1926), p. 121; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1937), pp. 566-567; James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Bros., n.d.), p. 201; Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II in HzNT* (4th ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949), p. 66; Jean Hering, *La Première Épître de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (Paris: Delachaux et Niestle, 1949), p. 120; F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), pp. 308-309; Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), pp. 186-187; A. Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces: A Commentary on I Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 91; D. Metz, "I Corinthians," *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1968), p. 444; C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 306; Hans Conzelmann, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther in KEK* (11th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969), p. 267; R. B. Brown, "I Corinthians," *Broadman Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970), p. 374; and F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London: Oliphants, 1971), p. 128.

49 Cf. for instance, T. T. Shore, "I Corinthians," *Ellicotts Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954; reprint of 1877-1882 ed.), p. 339.

50 Cf. among others, William G. MacDonald, "Glossolalia in the New Testament," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*, VII (1964), pp. 59-68, and earlier, Bernhard Weiss, *A Commentary on the New Testament* (trans. G. Shodde; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), III, p. 240.

51 Cf. George Matheson, "Scripture Studies of the Heavenly State," *The Expositor*, 2nd ser., VI (1883), pp. 464-465.

52 "To Teleion in I Corinthians," *Restoration Quarterly*, XIV (1971), pp. 168-183.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 174.

54 *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles*, ed. J. W. Shepherd (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1935), II, pp. 200-202; which is essentially the same as his earlier *Queries and Answers*, ed. J. W. Shepherd (3rd ed.; Nashville: McQuiddy, 1911), pp. 402-407. Polemical usage of this view may be found in the *Nichols-Weaver Debate* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1944), pp. 55-94.

55 "I Corinthians," *A Commentary*, ed. R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown (1878 ed.), III, p. 322; which may well have been the source also for the comment on *glossa* in W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (London: Oliphants, 1940), IV, p. 143. It is interesting to note that Fausset's view was not shared by David Brown, "First Epistle to the Corinthians," *Schaff's Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882), III, p. 214.

56 The rev. ed. (New York: Doran, 1921), reads "... as no longer required when the ordinary preaching of the word, and the Scriptures of the New Testament collected together, had become established institutions."

57 The presentation of this view by H. Y. Kellar, "When the Perfect Came," *Christian Standard*, XXXV, 21 (May 27, 1899), pp. 651-652, is obviously dependent upon Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, which he has either misread or misrepresented, and has no claim to originality.

58 Cf. B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament* (5th ed.; Cambridge: Macmillan, 1881); Theodor Zahn, *Grundriss der geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1904); and more recently David Dungan, "The New Testament Canon in Recent Study," *Interpretation*, XXIX (1975), pp. 339-351.

59 The attempt by R. L. Roberts, Jr., "That Which Is Perfect"—I Cor. 13:10," *Restoration*

Quarterly, III (1959), pp. 202-203, followed by J. W. Roberts, "'That Which Is Perfect' in I Corinthians 13:8-10," *Firm Foundation*, (July 25, 1972), p. 468, to trace this view back to Chrysostom remains unconvincing, as it apparently arises from a misreading of Lange's commentary. Chrysostom, like various early writers, took v. 8 to mean that the supernatural gifts were discontinued when the Christian faith was sown abroad and such gifts were then superfluous; however, Chrysostom did not hesitate to take *to teleion* in v. 10 to refer to the hereafter, and apparently saw no exegetical discrepancy in doing so. Not noting this aspect of Chrysostom's text, Lange's comment on v. 8 has been incorrectly applied to *to teleion* in v. 10. The "traditional" view of v. 8, that the gifts passed away at an early period, does not necessitate the canon as the referent in v. 10, as the foregoing survey indicates. The "completed canon" theory cannot be traced to Chrysostom, nor can it properly be called the "traditional view" of v. 10.

60 J. W. Roberts, *Firm Foundation*, (1972), p. 468.

61 Cf. among others F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, "The Structure of St. Paul's Hymn of Love," *Expository Times*, XXXIV (Aug., 1923), pp. 488-492, who views the "hymn" to have been written in metre, and holds that, as Paul wrote, he styled the text from his recollection of choral odes from Euripides. Hitchcock presents this view in greater detail in "St. Paul's Hymn of Love," *Theology*, XXVI (1933), pp. 65-75, but it has failed to gain acceptance among scholars.

62 *Der erste Korintherbrief*, p. 311, sees a lack of metre in the chapter. Cf. p. 314 for a stylistic analysis of the chapter.

63 "Das hohe Lied des Apostels Paulus von der Liebe (I Kor. 13) und seine religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," *Sitzungsber. der Preussischen Akad. der Wissensch.* (1911), pp. 132-163.

64 *Agape dans le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1959), II, p. 59.

65 Hering, *La premiere epître de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens*, p. 115.

66 Anton Fridrichsen and E. Lehman, "I Kor. 13. Eine christlich-stoische Diatribe," *Neutestamentliche Studien in Theologische Studien und Kritiken* (Hamburg: Gotha, 1922), XCIV, pp. 55-95.

67 Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, p. 257, and J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, p. 311.

68 Jack T. Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War," *Interpretation*, XX (1966), pp. 159-187, esp. p. 183; although under the influence of James M. Robinson of Claremont, and following Karl Barth, *Die Auferstehung der Toten* (Zollikon-Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag AG, 1924), Sanders erroneously places 12:31b-13:13 after 14:40. Cf. also the negative assessment of E. L. Titus, "Did Paul Write I Corinthians 13?" *Journal of Bible and Religion*, XXVII (1959), pp. 299-302.

69 A point often overlooked in exegetical work on I Corinthians 13. Cf. Nils Johansson, "I Cor. XIII and I Cor. XIV," *New Testament Studies*, X (1963/64), p. 383.

70 Cf. among others, J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, p. 257; also Nils A. Dahl, *Apostelen Paulus' Høisang om Kjaerligheten* (Oslo: Grondahl and Sons Boktrykkeri, 1936); esp. the survey of the literary problems of I Corinthians in recent study on pp. 8-35.

71 "The Literary Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, L. (1931), pp. 266-276, esp. 268-269; which supplants all earlier attempts to locate rhythmic patterns in the chapter.

72 Cf. Gunther Bornkamm, "Der kostlichere Weg: I Kor. 13," *Jahrbuch der Theologischen Schule Bethel*, VIII (1937), pp. 132ff., for a convincing refutation of Werner Jaeger, "Tyrtaios über die wahre Arete," *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie*, (1932), pp. 537-568, who sees direct influence on Paul from an elegy by Tyrtæus. Cf. also Gunnar Rudberg, "Zu I Cor. 13,"

Otto Lagercrantz *MNEMOSUNON in Coniectanea neotestamentica* (Uppsala: Seminarium neotestamenticum upsaliense, 1938), III, p. 32.

73 Robertson and Plummer, *ICC*, p. 289, miss the point when they note as classical parallels to "noisy gong or clanging cymbal" the use of these instruments in the cults of Dionysius, Cybele and the Corybantes. Cf. also N. W. deWitt, "Notes on Corinthians 1:13," *Canadian Journal of Religious Thought*, VII (1930), pp. 216-219, and Harald Riesenfeld, "Note supplementaire sur I Cor. XIII," *Walter Bauer Gottingensi viro de Novi Testamenti Philologica Optime Merito Sacrum in Coniectanea neotestamentica* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1948), XII, pp. 49-53. J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, p. 313, has correctly noted that the *tertium comparationis* between the *glossai* and the clanging instruments is the meaninglessness of both types of sounds.

74 Cf. I John 4:14-18. Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to treat in detail the textual problem in v. 3, it may be noted that whether one reads *kauthesomai* with Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, p. 65, et al, following mss. CDG, or *kauchesomai* with Hering, *La premiere Epitre de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens*, p. 118, et al, following p. 46 SAB, the attitude of the person in either case would be inappropriate.

75 Cf. Hans D. Betz, *Lukian von Samosata in Texte und Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1961), LXXVI, p. 122, for description of the self-burning of Peregrinus. Plutarch, *Alexander*, 69; Strabo, XV, i, 73; and Dio Cassius, LIV, 9, mention an Indian who terminated his life in this manner in the time of Augustus.

76 Adolf Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu: Eine Deutung seiner Briefe an die Korinther* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1934), p. 359.

77 Bachmann, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (4th ed., ed. Ethelbert Stauffer; Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1936), p. 507; and earlier, Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu*, p. 353.

78 Robertson and Plummer, *ICC*, p. 293, omit the third *he agape* in v. 4 with B (following Hort) against SACDEFGKL syr goth et al. W.G. Kummel in Lietzmann, *An Die Korinther I-II*, Appx. p. 189, has the preferable solution to both the textual and punctuation problem in v. 4 as he accepts the third *he agape* with solid textual support as original and reads *he agape makrothumei, chresteuetai he agape, ou zeloi he agape*, "the third *he agape* being the subject of the following series of negatives.

79 J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, p. 317, suggests, evidently correctly, that *stegeri* refers to love "keeping silent," or not discussing the sin or undesirable aspects of another person, since it continues to believe and hope in the other person. G. H. Whitaker, "Love Springs No Leak," *The Expositor*, 8th series XXI (1921), pp. 126-128, notes that *stego* is used of a bowl that does not leak or a ship that does not take water. This older meaning of the term does fit better with the chiasmic relation of *stego* to *hupomeno* in this verse.

80 Cf. the overstatement of vv. 4-7 in H. D. Wendland, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (6th ed.; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1954), p. 105.

81 Cf. among others Wilhelm Michaelis, "Pipto," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VI, pp. 165-166; and E. Lehman and A. Fridrichsen, *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, (1922), pp. 89f. Michaelis argued his case further in *Paulus-Hellas-Oikumene*, pp. 135-140.

82 A point of which Michaelis, *TDNT*, VI, p. 166, fn. 29, was not unaware. The omission of *de* in p. 46 C* D* F G K P and a few other mss. has no claim to authenticity.

83 Cf. M. de Jonge, ed., *Testamenta XII Patriarcharum* (2nd ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), and the study of Gerhard von Rad, "Die Vorgeschichte der Gattung von I Kor. 13, 4-7," *Geschichte und Altes Testament: Festschrift für Albrecht Alt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953), pp. 153-168, esp. 154-156, for examples of a virtue being described by a series of negations and a concluding positive sentence involving *panta*.

84 Lund, *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1931), pp. 273-276.

85 As in Acts 11:27-28. Cf. the study of Ernest Best, "Prophets and Preachers," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, XII (1959), pp. 129ff; against Frederick W. Robertson, *Expository Lectures on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians* (new ed.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Trubner, 1902), p. 188.

86 Cf. for instance, T. C. Edwards, *Commentary on I Corinthians*, p. 349; John H. Michael, "The Gift of Tongues at Corinth," *The Expositor*, 7th series, IV (1907), pp. 252-266; Ira J. Martin, III, "Glossolalia in the Apostolic Church," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXIII (1944), pp. 123-130; and Robert Banks and Geoffrey Moon, "Speaking in Tongues," *The Churchman*, LXXX (1966), pp. 278-294, esp. 292.

87 Reginald H. Fuller, "Tongues in the New Testament," *American Church Quarterly*, III (1963), pp. 162-168; I. J. Martin, "I Corinthians 13 Interpreted by Its Context," *Journal of Bible and Religion*, XVIII (1950), p. 103, holds that "tongues of angels" refers to glossolalia.

88 Origen, commenting on I Cor. 14:18, takes the verse to refer to the permanent endowment of the ability to speak in foreign languages, and was followed in this view by Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, and Augustine, as well as by others.

89 H. H. Henson, *Apostolic Christianity* (London: Methuen, 1898), pp. 218f, is typical of those who demur.

90 "Glossa," *TDNT*, III, pp. 722f.

91 Cf. for instance Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (Chicago: Open Court, 1911), p. 104, T. K. Oesterreich, *Possession* (New York: R. R. Smith, 1930), pp. 311-312; and such texts as Plato, *Ion.*, 533-534.

92 Paul Dobson, "Look Closely at the Gifts in Corinth," *Firm Foundation*, LXXXVI (9 Sept., 1969), p. 565.

93 "Was the Gift of Tongues at Corinth Real?," *Firm Foundation*, LXXXVI (14 Oct., 1969), p. 644.

94 F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, p. 127.

95 Cf. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 309; against Robertson and Plummer, *ICC*, p. 297.

96 Cf. Stanly D. Toussaint, "First Corinthians Thirteen and the Tongues Question," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, CXX (1963), p. 413; and earlier, Lund, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, (1931), p. 274.

97 Although standard lexicons such as Liddell-Scott and Arndt-Gingrich survey the usages of the term in ancient literature, discussions are found in Gerhard Delling, "Teleios," *TDNT*, VIII, pp. 67-87, and Paul J. du Plessis, *TELEIOS: The Idea of Perfection in the New Testament* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1959).

98 F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (tr. and rev. by R. W. Funk; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 76.

99 Cf. Alexander Buttman, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek* (Andover: Draper, 1891), pp. 122-123, for examples in N.N. texts. Cf. also G. W. Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament* (rev. by G. Lunemann; Andover: Draper, 1870), p. 178, for classical examples.

100 C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 106.

101 *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 411; cf. also his numerous examples.

102 MacDonald, *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* (1964), p. 66, who erroneously understands *glossai* to refer to ecstatic speech, contends that it is incumbent on those who hold that such spiritual gifts have, in fact, already ceased to produce proof. For my own part, the

burden of proof rests rather on those who contend that the gifts continue. The basic purpose in granting these spiritual gifts to the early Christians was to establish the church first among the Jews and then among the Gentiles. In Acts 2 and 10 the gifts were given directly by God without human intervention. In the other instances in Acts the gifts were given through the laying on of apostolic hands. Once the church had been established in sufficient maturity, the reason for the gifts to exist was nullified. With the demise of the apostolic era came the concurrent demise of the spiritual gifts. For cursory studies of spiritual gifts in the patristic period, cf. W. M Green, “Glossolalia in the Second Century,” *Restoration Quarterly*, XVI (1973), pp. 231-239; John McRay, “Charismata in Second—Century Eschatology,” *The Last Things*, ed. J. P. Lewis (Austin, Tex.: Sweet Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 151-168; and McRay’s forthcoming “Charismata in the Second Century,” *Studia Patristica*, Vol. XII.

103 This motif has been noted by Birger A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in I Corinthians* (Missoula, Mont.: S.B.L., 1973).

104 Augustine, *On Baptism*, III, xiv, would appear to be correct in his view that the natural man of 2:14 was baptized.

105 Lenski, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 567; Godet, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, pp. 252-253; following earlier writers such as Heinrici, Olshausen, Bengel, and Theophylact, according to T. C. Edwards, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 349.

106 Cf. Adolf Harnack, “The Apostle Paul’s Hymn of Love,” *The Expositor*, 8th series, III (1912), p. 483.

107 Hering, *La Premiere Epitre de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens*, p. 120, erroneously notes the ancient magical use of mirrors to conjure up persons or scenes distant in space or time to be the meaning here. The suggestion by A. S. Perry, “I Corinthians 13, 12a,” *Expository Time*, LVIII (1946/47), p. 279, that this text should be understood in terms of Plato, *Republic*: VII, is far-fetched.

108 The phrase originally meant “in a riddle form”; cf. J. Behm, “Das Bildwort vom Spiegel I Korinther 13, 12,” *Reinhold-Seeberg-Festschrift*, ed. W. Koepf (Leipzig: Deichert, 1929), I, pp. 315-342. Robertson and Plummer, *ICC*, p. 298, take v. 12 as simply an *a fortiori* argument, since the Corinthian mirrors may well have given inadequate reflection.

109 Cf. Emanuel Miguens, “I Cor. 13:8-13 Reconsidered,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, XXXVII (1975), pp. 76-97, esp. 83-87.

110 A point alluded to by J. W. Roberts, “What About Tongue Speaking in the Church?”, *Firm Foundation* (July 12, 1966), p. 439.

111 Cf. Kathryn M. Sullivan, “*Epignosis* in the Epistles of St. Paul,” *Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus in Analecta Biblica*, XVII-XVIII (Romae: E. Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), II, pp. 405-416.

112 J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908), I, pp. 58-59.

113 Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu*, p. 365; Hering, *La Premiere Epitre de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens*, p. 120.

114 J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, p. 321; Robertson and Plummer, *ICC*, p. 300; Bachmann, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, p. 406; Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I/II*, p. 66.

115 Stephen S. Smalley, “Spiritual Gifts and I Corinthians 12-16,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXVII (1968), pp. 427-433.

AUTHORITY OF ELDERS

RAYMOND C. KELCY

PRESENT WORK: Minister at Wilshire Boulevard Church of Christ in Oklahoma City; serves as chairman of Bible Department of Oklahoma Christian College and teaches Bible and Greek in the College.



LOCAL WORK IN THE FOLLOWING CHURCHES: Twice with the Pioneer Park Church in Lubbock; twice with Tenth and Rockford in Tulsa; Snyder, Texas; Trail Lake in Fort Worth.

SCHOLASTIC BACKGROUND:

B.A.—in Bible from Abilene Christian College, 1938.

M.A.—Religious Education from University of Tulsa, 1950.

B.D.—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, 1957.

Th.D.—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, with a major in New Testament, 1964.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for this were profitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

The responsibility of elders toward other members of the church is a serious one, as is that of the members toward the elders. Since elders are to give accounts for the souls entrusted to their keeping, their responsibility must indeed be a serious one. If someone entrusts his child to your keeping for a day, or even for an hour, you know that he will return to you expecting to find his child safe and sound. You would surely feel a weighty responsibility in taking care of that child. Even if a neighbor who is going on vacation entrusts to you his dog, or his cat, or his canary, he will return to you expecting to find his pet in good condition. You would expect to give account to that neighbor if you failed to exercise every reasonable precaution in taking care of that which belongs to him. When we remember that God has entrusted to elders the care of the souls of human beings, the serious nature of our subject becomes at once apparent.

While we are thinking of such terms as entrusting, giving account, etc., the fact that elders are called "stewards" naturally comes to mind. "For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward. . . ." (Titus 1:7). A steward is an administrator or a manager of that which belongs to another. Stewardship implies responsibility in a very strong way. It also implies accountability. One who is entrusted with the affairs or the property of another, and who is given the responsibility of managing it, will go about his work with the realization that what has been committed to him is not his and that at some future time he will be called upon to give an account of the way he has managed the property of another. Faithful elders realize that the church belongs to Christ and that ultimately all authority belongs to Christ. They will be careful not to abuse the authority which the owner has given them. They will strive to their utmost ability to take care of the church in a way that is pleasing to their Master. They do all of this with the realization that they will give account for each and every soul committed to their keeping.

A very meaningful term given to elders in the New Testament is that of "shepherd" or "pastor." When Paul spoke to the elders from Ephesus, he exhorted them to "feed the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28). The word translated "feed" (Greek, *poimaino*) means to act as a shepherd. It is the verb of which the word "shepherd" is the cognate noun. Peter uses the same verb in exhorting the elders to "tend the flock of God which is among you." Peter's reference in the same passage to Christ as "the chief Shepherd" implies that he is thinking of elders as under-shepherds (1 Peter 5:2-4). Very definitely, both Paul and Peter urge elders to do the work of shepherds. Being a shepherd of necessity requires authority. Let us suppose that the owner of a flock of sheep employs a shepherd to tend the flock. He gives to him certain instructions and leaves the flock in his care. He gives some instructions which are of a very definite nature. For instance, he may specify that the sheep are to drink water only at certain designated places. They are to eat only that which they may obtain by grazing in a certain designated area. The fact that the shepherd is charged with these definite instructions means that he has the authority to carry out the instructions. He goes beyond his authority if he allows the sheep to obtain water or food from any places other than those designated by the owner, thus proving himself to be an unfaithful shepherd. Neither is he being faithful if he allows someone else to come along and lead the sheep into other watering and feeding places. Also to be considered is the fact that there will be details connected with the feeding and the watering which the owner has not specified, but has left up to the shepherd. Matters such as the exact time for allowing the sheep to graze or to go to water or to be placed inside the fold at night could come within this area. However, though not specified by the owner, these are matters upon which decisions must be made if the shepherd is to carry out the instructions which have been given by the owner of the flock. It would be folly to suppose that the shepherd does not have the authority

to decide in these matters. In fact, since the owner has left the sheep in his care, no one but the shepherd has the right to decide these matters. Again, there may be areas in which the owner has given only general instructions. For instance, he may warn the shepherd to be on the alert for anything which would harm the sheep and to protect them from such dangers. This, too, would confer a certain authority upon the shepherd. He must be on the alert for wolves and other predators. He must be on the alert for pits and crevices into which the sheep might fall. The shepherd has authority to watch for all these things. He has authority which others who are not shepherds do not have. He has authority over that flock which others, though they may be shepherds over other flocks, do not have over that specific flock.

The chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, has given to elders specific instructions in some matters. He has specified that Christians are to be fed with word of God, the word unadulterated by the doctrines of men. Elders must, if they are to be faithful shepherds, see that the word of God is preached from the pulpit. They have the authority to see that that word only is preached. They have the right to arrange various classes and other types of teaching situations in which the word is taught. Specific days and hours for such teaching is to be determined by them. They have liberty in deciding when the teaching is to be done. They do not have the liberty to decide whether the thing taught will be the word of God or something else. That has already been decided upon by the chief Shepherd. But they do have the authority to see that what the chief Shepherd has said must be taught is being taught. They have the right to employ a faithful preacher of the gospel; they do not have the right to employ one who is not true to the gospel. However, they do have the right to decide which faithful preacher they will employ. They have the authority to guard against false teachers. One of the reasons

given by Paul for urging elders to be watchful was the fact that he knew "grievous wolves" would enter among them, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29). The elders have the specific authority to convict gainsayers and to stop the mouths of unruly men and vain talkers (Titus 1:9-11).

In saying that elders have authority to make decisions in matters where the Lord has not given detailed instructions, but which must be made in order to carry out instructions given by the Lord, we are not saying that this involves arbitrary decisions without regard to the wishes of the flock. Wise elders will feel the pulse of the membership and surely will not select a certain hour for meeting when it is evident that the greater part of the church prefer some other hour. Elders have no authority to decide whether the Lord's Supper will be observed on the first day of the week or on some other day. They do have the authority to see that it is observed on the first day of the week in the congregation which they serve. As to the exact hour, wise elders do not arbitrarily decide according to their own whims. In overseeing the flock, they must not lord it over the flock (1 Peter 5:3).

This seems to be the appropriate place to refer to the word "bishop," another word used in the New Testament to refer to the elders. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that the Holy Spirit had made them bishops or overseers of the flock (Acts 20:28). Writing to Titus, Paul mentions the fact that he had left him in Crete to "set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city." He then proceeds to set forth qualifications of elders and says, "For the bishop must be blameless, etc." (Titus 1:5, 7).

Writing to Timothy, Paul declared that "If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work." Paul then goes ahead to say, "The bishop therefore must be without re-

proach, etc.” (1 Timothy 3:1-2). It can easily be seen that elders and bishops were not two groups but were the same.

What, specifically, is the meaning of “bishop” (Greek, *episkopos*)? Thayer says it means “an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly.” An elder, then, is given the responsibility of overseeing that which is being done by others. Moreover, he is to see that this work is done properly. This responsibility, of necessity, involves authority of a kind. Elders should do some of the teaching in a church. If they do this as they should, they will be feeding the flock. However, they should not do all of the teaching. But they must, if they are to be true to the work assigned to them, oversee the teaching done by others. If a teacher is not teaching God’s word, the elders must see to it that he begins to do so or that he is replaced by one who will. If a teacher is habitually late, the elders should appeal to that one in such a way that he or she becomes punctual or they should replace that teacher with someone who will be punctual. If some phase of the work of the church is being done in a slovenly and disorderly fashion, the elders should see that it is improved.

It has been the contention of some that the extent of the authority of elders is that of leading, going before, being examples to the flock. Surely, no one is ready to question the importance of example. An elder cannot lead if he is not a good example. In fact, a man is not qualified to be an elder in the Lord’s church unless he is willing to be a good example. People would rather see a sermon than hear one any day, and this truth is especially applicable to elders and their work. However, as can be seen from some of the things before pointed out, there are times when an elder must do more than be a good example. If a teacher in a class is not faithful in teaching God’s word, an elder must do more than be a faithful

teacher in the class he may be teaching. As to the habitually late teacher, it is not enough that the elders themselves always be on time for their classes. If the teacher is to straighten up or if it becomes necessary for him to be replaced, then elders have to do more than be good examples. They have to take action in making a wrong situation right.

A necessary conclusion regarding such matters as we have been discussing is that members of the flock are to obey the elders. If the habitually late teacher is admonished by the elders to be punctual, that teacher should start being punctual. If the teacher does not heed the admonition of the elders, then there should be no resentment on his part if the elders replace him. If a man is assigned to a particular work of benevolence and is only half doing his job, he should not resent being replaced. Nor should other members of the church rally around such negligent members and criticize the elders for their actions. If they pursue this course, they are not doing what we are admonished to do in relation to the elders: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). Since Paul asks the question regarding elders: "But if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Timothy 3:5), it is evident that there is some similarity sustained by a family to the head of the house to that sustained by members of the church to elders. When God grants authority to a person, obedience is not to be refused as long as the one with authority is acting in harmony with the word of God.

It is readily granted that a man can overstep his authority as an elder. He can act in such a way as to lord it over God's heritage. He can attempt to throw his weight around and this

is something he is not to do. Such a man shows himself unqualified to be an elder. I am glad to say that in my own experience I have never worked with an elder that I thought was trying to lord it over the church. Perhaps others have had experiences which are more unpleasant. At times our experiences tend to mold our attitudes toward things and men. Regardless of our experiences, we should go to the word of God for our standard. Let us encourage elders. Let us encourage others to become qualified elders. And let us encourage members of the church to obey the elders.

Featured Class

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

BOB DOUGLAS

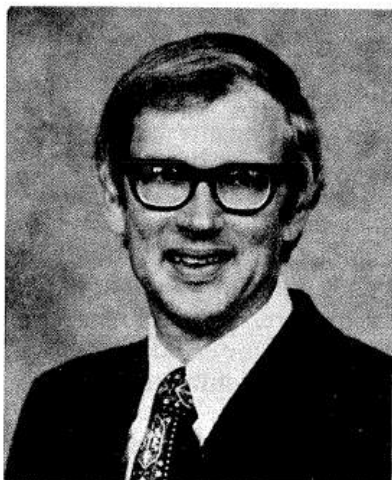
Bob Douglas was born April 16, 1935, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was baptized June, 1952, by Paul Johnston at Capitol Hill Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

Douglas is married to June E. Harris. They married in Oklahoma City in 1952. They have two children—Robert Paul, 18, and Rebecca Ruth, 15.

Douglas graduated from high school at the Capitol Hill High School, Oklahoma City.

He received the B.A. Degree in 1956 from Abilene Christian College, and the M.A. Degree in 1957 from Abilene Christian College. An additional four years of graduate work at Abilene Christian College in 1970-1974.

He preached at Sixth and Arlington Church of Christ in Lawton, Oklahoma, May, 1957-January, 1961. His Mission Work in the Middle East, sponsored and supported by Sixth and Arlington, 1961-1969. In 1961-1965 he established congregations in Cairo, Egypt. In 1965-1969—Evangelistic work in Beirut, Lebanon. 1966—Founded Middle East Bible Training College, served as President until 1969. Douglas also preached at College Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas, 1969-1975.



Occasional articles for various brotherhood periodicals, including *Firm Foundation*, *Christian Bible Teacher*, and *Power for Today*.

Author of one book, *Freedom in Christ*, published in 1972. Contributed materials to two other books, *Spiritual Power*, 1973, and *What Lack I Yet?*, 1975.

Douglas helped produce first gospel literature in Arabic language, 1963. He spoke on Abilene Christian College Lectureship Programs, 1968 and 1971 and also spoke on Lubbock Christian College Lectureship Program, 1973. Douglas was named as Outstanding Young Man of America, 1970.

“What, not ‘freedom’ again? Surely that one’s played out!” Such would be the response of some people in more than one religious movement to the theme “Freedom in Christ.” I hope such is not your reaction; in fact, I know it is not, or you would not be here. There is so much to be learned about this vital Biblical theme. And it is a *theme* of Scripture, you know, not just an incidental teaching.

We as a fellowship have so much to learn in this area. A careful consideration of freedom in Christ is necessary not only to being Biblical, it is also vital to remaining in touch with our forefathers. Leaders in the early Restoration Movement seem to have had a great appreciation for and understanding of Christian liberty. Remember one of their slogans: “In essentials unity, in non-essentials *liberty*, in all things charity.” Unfortunately, some of our more recent champions have not matched those early pioneers in understanding New Testament freedom. We have much to learn!

Please understand, I do not propose to present myself as one who knows and whose job is to teach you, the uninitiated. I have so much to learn. I anticipate that much of what I say

these next few days will be more by way of reminding all of us. I also beg for your sympathy, for I face an impossible task. The New Testament doctrine of freedom is so rich and varied that we can only sketch some of its more general aspects in three days of classes.

The term "freedom" and its counterpart "liberty" are two of the most stirring words in man's vocabulary. In a year dedicated to the observance of our nation's bicentennial, these words conjure up all sorts of hopes and dreams, fulfilled and unfulfilled. They prompt a sense of national pride, a re-living of our history—and perplexity about the ways in which liberty has gone astray or been less than fully realized by many.

There is a kind of freedom that is far more wonderful than political liberty. It is far more accessible to the world's masses, who know so little of democracy. It, unlike our American freedom, is not dependent upon a certain level of education, economic opportunity and political stability. This freedom is available even to those who are locked away in prison. It is available to those who will never have an opportunity to decide such basic questions as "Where shall I live geographically?" "What shall I do for a living?" "Whom shall I marry?" "For whom shall I vote?" The freedom I speak of is no less than "freedom in Christ." It is ours as a divinely given privilege—one that no man can take away—one that is not subject to being lost or impaired through changing times.

But we are ahead of ourselves. Let's back up and notice a few basic concepts. First, let's establish the fact that the New Testament does speak unmistakably about "freedom" or "liberty."

One approach that some use in determining the relative importance of any Bible topic is word counting! It is the

simple process of counting how many times a word occurs in Scripture. Thus, if word "A" occurs one hundred times, and word "B" occurs only twenty-five times, then "A" must be four times more significant than "B." And so the doctrine embodied in "A" should receive more stress.

Another similar technique is hunting up the number of verses which contain our chosen word, or seem directly related to it. You have seen this done with concepts like baptism. Approaching our subject in either of these ways results in freedom not coming off too well. For there are only about half as many occurrences of the word "freedom" as there are occurrences of words like "elder" or "baptism." Freedom rates about the same count as the terms used for the Lord's supper. Of course, you realize this is a highly unrealistic way of getting at great Biblical themes.

When we look closely at the Word, we discover that whole sections of books, and in fact, entire books, are dedicated to teaching what freedom in Christ is and means. All of this suggests that we are dealing with a subject that is far more extensive, and is to be taken far more seriously, than has often been the case.

Listen to a few specific references to freedom. Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He added, "If the Son makes you free, you are free indeed." In the book of Romans, Paul tells us, "Now you are free from sin." In chapter 8, verse 2, he says, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free, free from the law of sin and death." In I Corinthians 9:1 Paul raises the question, "Am I not free?" Halfway through the same chapter he asserts in no uncertain terms, "I am free from all men."

II Corinthians 3:17 tells us, "Where the Spirit is, the Lord is, for the Spirit is the Lord, and there is freedom." Galatians 5:1, says "For freedom did Christ set us free. Stand fast,

therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of bondage." The 13th verse of the same chapter adds, "For you have been called to freedom, brethren. Only do not let your freedom be an opportunity for the flesh." And, finally, in I Peter 2:16, almost the same thought occurs. "You were called to freedom, only use not your freedom as a pretext for doing evil."

But what does "freedom" mean? In part, the answer to that question depends on who is using the term. Freedom means different things to different people. Generally what it means is determined by where they are, that is, what conditions they are facing in life. Consider a person in jail, another living with social inequities, another who is a citizen under a dictatorship. Each of these would conceive of freedom in a somewhat different way.

Freedom in Christ likewise takes on its meaning in view of where men are. Its meaning is not determined by men through a process of formulating a definition. Rather its meaning is formulated by Christ in view of where man is spiritually, socially, and culturally. For humanity is in sin and so is in bondage of many kinds. Christ frees from all of these.

To help us get started we can utilize a standard dictionary definition of freedom. It certainly is not always safe to do that with Biblical concepts. And even here we do not offer the dictionary definition as a mold into which to squeeze the Bible's message. Rather this definition is workable because beginning *with the Bible*, examining what it says and suggests, and then summarizing, we find ourselves coming out here.

This definition is found in volume four of the Oxford English Dictionary: "Freedom is exemption or release from slavery or imprisonment, exemption from arbitrary or autocratic control; freedom is the state of being able to act without

hindrance or restraint; freedom is the state of not being affected by defect or disadvantage. In other words, it is exemption from a specific burden, charge or service. It is immunity, a privilege. Freedom is the right of participating in the privileges attached to membership in a company or trade. Or citizenship in a town, city or country." It can be very clearly seen from this definition that freedom is not license, or anarchy; neither is freedom what some would term liberalism. Rather it must be seen that freedom is liberty.

Much of what the New Testament proclaims borrows heavily an Old Testament ideas and provisions. Freedom is no exception. A couple of examples will be sufficient. Leviticus 25 describes the "year of jubilee," the fiftieth year in the Hebrew calendar. It is proclaimed as a time of liberty (Leviticus 25:10). In the Old Testament, freedom always carries the primary idea of release from physical restraint. And so God orders that the Hebrew who had placed himself in indentured servitude to a fellow Hebrew—a position where all sorts of physical, economic, social, and psychological restraint existed—was to be released from this circumstance. He was to be set free and also released from the debt that had made the servitude necessary in the first place. Likewise, any land which he may have had to sell years earlier in coping with his debts, was to revert back to the family to which it was allotted in original land division in Joshua's day. It was to be returned free and clear. Freedom thus meant, not only release, but also restitution so that life could begin again on a new plane.

Isaiah speaks in the same way in 61:1. In this context God is telling Israel what he plans to do for her. The nation is spoken of as in captivity in Babylon. God says he is going to bring her out of that imprisonment. He will set her at liberty. Such an idea held many wonderful possibilities for a conquered, deported people.

Jesus chose this text from Isaiah to set forth his purpose and program of action as he begins his ministry in Nazareth. (Luke 4:18f) He reads, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to spread good news to the poor. he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the accepted year of the Lord." Then he announces, "This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." He then is the great liberator, building on and extending the Old Testament idea to new undreamed of horizons.

Freedom is in Christ. It is found nowhere else and in no other relationship. At this point we must spend a few minutes stressing what ought to be obvious, and yet evidently is not to many. Religious language, like any other kind of language, can become encrusted with so many assumed ideas that its real meaning is totally lost on those who hear. In this case, such has happened to the expression "in Christ."

Our initial stress must be on "Christ." He is the One who is all significant for the life of the believer and for the life of the church. It is easy for us—in view of nearly two thousand years of church history, with all of its problems, debates and divisions—and in view of our own history of nearly two hundred years, with all of its problems, debates and divisions, to be preoccupied with a thousand and one things other than Jesus. Yet He stands at the center of the Biblical revelation and the Christian faith. He also stands at the center of any discussion of freedom.

Freedom is real because Christ is real. Freedom does not exist apart from the Lord. He is our liberator. "He sent me. . .to set a liberty those who are oppressed. . ." (Luke 4:18). There are overtones of freedom in all the Bible's descriptions of His role. Whether we think of Christ as savior, redeemer, reconciler. . .whatever, freedom is implied if not spelled out specifically.

Christ is *the one* who sets us free. He sets us free by what he did on the cross, in the resurrection and in His reign. Thus, His freedom is not merely a freedom proclaimed by word, but secured by deed. He and He alone is the key that unlocks all our binding chains. . . sin, guilt, demonic power, self, society's pressure, tradition, fear, pride, purposelessness, worthlessness.

Unfortunately, in our preaching, teaching, and daily discussions of Christianity, we have all too often focused on factors that occupy less than center stage in the Kingdom of God. This is not to say that these are unworthy of discussion or concern, but it is to say that one can become so occupied with the trees so as to miss the forest.

Freedom is "in" Christ, that is, in union with Him. In a state of oneness with Him. "In" points to so much more than just place; it emphasizes a condition of existence, or a relationship. Since freedom is in Christ it is not of our creation. It is not based on us or designed by us. It is God's gift to man to be cherished, used, and enjoyed.

The oneness or union that the New Testament speaks of is a union that is total . . . one in which we are one with Him in mind and spirit. It is effected, on the divine side, through the Holy Spirit. He dwells in us and through his presence, Christ is in us. We also dwell in Him. From the human side, it is effected through Biblical faith, that is, a complete trust in Jesus as Lord, Saviour, and Provider. Faith or trust of this kind is a tremendous challenge to any of us, as it involves death to self. That's the hard part. So few of us are willing to really let go of self—of ego—of pride, so that God really controls our hearts and lives. This is precisely the reason so few know real freedom in Christ. They have been unwilling to die in self. Incidentally, death to self cannot be equated with being religious, church going, baptism, pew warming, etc.

While it will respond in such activities, the mere presence of these activities—externals—is no guarantee that one has died to himself. Christ can live in one's heart only where self has vacated with heart. To be alive in Christ and alive to Christ, one must be dead to self.

This involves crucifying the old man, the old mind. It involves crucifying my mind, my aims, values and will, that His might prevail. Where one has died to self and thus is one with Christ, it is illogical to be afraid of freedom. The only man who abuses freedom is the man who is still alive to himself. And that man is not really free, but lives under the illusion of being free. One absolutely united with Christ won't abuse his privilege.

Put another way, this matter of being in Christ, involves taking Christ's Lordship seriously. Where he is lord, we of necessity are servants. Here is the paradox of New Testament freedom. The free man is a slave and the slave is a free man. Now the servant is not committed to doing his own will. He has no will of his own, if he is a servant. Where there is no servanthood there is no freedom. There is only a faked freedom, which on closer examination turns out to be a subtle kind of self assertion under the guise of religion. That is what happens in many congregations. Leadership, membership, the disgruntled, sometimes all of these blocs and more, persist in asserting their will, all in the name of preserving or developing true Christianity. And in reality, all that is happening is that men are casting aside the concept of servanthood to do their own thing. Christ, the perfect servant of the Father, not seeking His own will or His own glory, but that of the Father—He is our model of what being free amounts to.

Freedom in the New Testament is both freedom "from" certain things, and freedom "for" certain other things. Let's consider some aspects of freedom as freedom "from." It

should be obvious to all of us that the principle thrust of the doctrine of freedom taught by Christ was *not* in terms of political or social liberty. Such may well be by-products within a society that allows Jesus to have His way, but such is by no means guaranteed. For all of the New Testament's emphasis on freedom, the Roman Empire of the first century was no freer politically or socially when the apostles passed from the scene that it was when they first came with their revolutionary message.

This means that Christ came to set men free from all forms of inner captivity, to free the human spirit from all that binds it morally and spiritually. And so initially freedom has to do with sin and all the by-products of sin in a man's life. Romans 6:22 tells us, "Now you are free from sin." Sin, released in one's life, becomes a tyrant which enslaves in the worst possible way. The Word refers to this truth so many times. For example, Jesus said, "He that commits sin is the slave of sin" (John 8:34). Sin comes as more than an occasional visitor. It "reigns" and asserts "dominion" (Romans 6:12, 14).

Scripture also tells us that "sin is deceitful" for Satan "disguises himself as an angel of light" (Hebrews 3:13; II Cor. 11:14). Part of the deception wrought by sin and Satan is the illusion that the sinner is free. . .that it is only in sinning that one throws off all restraints and knows true liberty. "They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption" (II Peter 2:19).

You recall the response of the crowd to Jesus' statement, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will be made free'?" Such reflects the blindness and pride of man. This assertion was absurd, for Israel had been in bondage to first one nation and then another for centuries. But more

important, those who said this were in the clutches of Satan, bound up in their sin, pride, preconceived idea of God and the Messiah, and so could not see that the message of the prophets was coming true before their very eyes.

How many times people say, "I can do what I please." But when sin has taken up residence within us this is not the case. Such is sheer delusion. The man who is bound by sin does not do what he wishes; he does what sin wishes. And there is no possibility of his breaking out of his captivity apart from divine action on his behalf.

Freedom in Christ involves freedom from sin. The New Testament says, "You are free from sin" (Romans 6:22). And "For freedom did Christ set you free." Freedom from sin has several wonderful facets. It means freedom from the guilt of sin with all of its attendant fear of discovery, and anticipation of wrath. This includes fear of death. It also means freedom from the power of sin within us as a controlling principle. We need to spend a little time examining each of these concepts.

We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God and down deep we all know it. We recognize that we are guilty. Remember Jacob! He stole his brother's birthright by deception. Feeling the guilt of his crime, and fearing for his life, he fled. Some years later he started back home. His conduct on that return trip reveals his heart. He must have thought, "Has Esau forgotten what I did to him? Does he still hold it against me, and if he does what will he do when he sees me?" One thing was sure, Jacob had not forgotten. He was weighed down with a sense of guilt.

Many of us are like Jacob, only the One we flee is God, not Esau. And no matter how far we flee or how much time elapses, we feel pretty certain that God has not forgotten. We find ourselves wrestling with ourselves, with loneliness, aliena-

tion, fear. We cry out in the spirit of David in Psalm 69, "The waters have come up to my neck. I'm slipping deep in the mire, I have come to deep waters and the flood is sweeping over me. I'm weary with my crying and my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim."

Such a state is the state of bondage. The bondage of our guilt eats away at our inner parts. No man who is locked up by his guilty conscience in fear of death and punishment is in any sense a free man. But in Christ we are free, for as we come to Him in the empty wretchedness of our soul, confessing our sin, surrendering to Him and His atoning death, we find the burden lifted. It is lifted by God's intervention. It is cancelled by His limitless grace. It is blotted out by His divine blood. In its place peace is substituted.

Romans 5:9 says, "We have been justified by the blood of Christ." Here is the basis of it all. The sheer worth of His shed blood leads God to "justify" us. And what does "justification" mean? It simply means that God has determined to treat us as innocent though we are guilty. He does so because He treated Christ as guilty though He was innocent.

In Romans 4, Paul quotes words from David which say, "Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven and whose iniquities are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin." Think about that! Not "blessed is the man who has ceased from sin." No, God never imposes that demand. God recognizes that so long as we are in the flesh we will sin. God chooses not to count our sins against us when they are committed—if we are one with Christ.

Romans 5:9 says, "If we are justified by his blood, much more then shall we be saved from the wrath of God by him." It is not just the removal of guilt; it is also the removal of the penalty due because we are guilty. It is escaping the wrath of

God. And so fear passes. . . .fear of life, fear of death, and ultimately fear of God.

But then what of the reign of sin? What of sin's power to dominate our lives? Being set free from guilt and its accompanying penalty is wonderful. But it is incomplete if the same old evil power continues to run and ruin my life. Paul tells us that Jesus' freeing influence reaches into sin's power base and breaks it. Romans 6:17 says, "He that has died is free from sin." The verses earlier in the chapter say, "We have been crucified with Christ. . .the old man of sin has been laid to rest" and so sin "shall not have dominion over us." In the past we confessed that "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" because sin "dwells within me." So the cry went up, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of death?" But now we rejoice, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."

The means of bringing this grand event to pass is the Holy Spirit. He is given to us as God's marvelous gift to dwell in us. He is the means of Jesus continuing His presence, power, and redemptive work in us. As our hearts are open to the Spirit's presence, work and influence, the practical power of sin as a controlling force (or law) is steadily reduced. In some circles this is called Christian growth or sanctification. In fact, it is God's work; it is an aspect of freedom in Christ.

And so we live in a world where sin continues to be present working its ill effects in many lives. Yet the believer passes by unaffected, much as a man who has been inoculated against cholera can move in an area where an epidemic is raging without being infected. He can even minister to those who are ill and yet remain safe himself. For he has immunity. One of the great advantagess of being a member of the United States Foreign Service is diplomatic privilege. A diplomat is sur-

rounded with a certain kind of immunity. He can park his car in a no parking zone and it will not be tagged. He can be involved in an accident where it is his fault, but he cannot be prosecuted. He is immune. He will never be haled into court, because he cannot be.

In Christ we do not cease from sin altogether. Sin still enters our lives, but it no longer is the dominant force in our lives. Even the influence it has is constantly diminishing because of the Spirit's presence and control. And where sin does occur, it does not succeed in condemning us, for we have immunity. Our sins are not counted against us. We are indeed free.

Freedom in Christ also has another side of tremendous importance. Paul wrote, "For freedom did Christ set you free. Stand fast, therefore, and do not again submit to the yoke of bondage." When the apostle said this he was not thinking of the slavery that is imposed by egotism or sin and its power. Rather he had in mind the slavery that is the result of a man submitting to a system of religion that is purely legal. That is, it amounts to laws or rules that must be kept. A system where justification depends altogether on what one does, rather than totally on what God has done for us in Christ. The New Testament not only teaches that we have been redeemed from *the* law (Galatians 3:13) but also that we have been set free from *law* (Romans 3:28) as a basis for justification.

So when Paul speaks of a "yoke of bondage" he is talking about graceless religion. He contends that we have been set free from a religion consisting solely in a code to be kept without regard to the spirit by which it is kept. "For the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life." He has in mind the kind of religion in which a man strives with all of his inner might to perform so much good that he earns his way to heaven. Please remember that a religion that is not *totally* dependent on the grace of God is graceless religion. There is

no such thing as a divine religion that blends a certain percentage of good works with a certain percentage of grace to come up with a saving combination. It's either all by grace or not at all!

How often do people look at a man's relationship with God in the light of a demanding parent's relation with his child. Let me illustrate it this way. The parent says, or implies, "Clean up your plate, and if you do, I'll smile at you. And if you don't, I'll slap you." The parent does not heed the earnest cries of the youngster who says, "I'm full. I don't want any more. If I have to eat any more I feel like I'll throw up." The parent's reply implies, "Clean up your plate anyway. . . .that's the only way you'll win my favor."

So many people have this concept of Christianity. Paul says we have been set free from any such concept as this. In fact, God has never dealt with man on this basis. Even the law of Moses was not such an arrangement. We have often thought it was! And the Judaizers of Paul's day sort of thought of it in that same way. But God never intended it to be such.

In the mind of the apostle Paul, freedom from sin and freedom from the law were very closely related. This we see in Romans 6:14 as Paul says, "for sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace." Now there's the idea of the Christian being free from the dominating influence of sin. Sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but are under grace. Paul links the two. There is some connection between being free from sin and being free from the law, or from being free from the law and being free from sin.

May we pose a question—why are there so few Christians who appear to have a deep and continuing consciousness of being free from the guilt of sin? I suppose many answers could

given to that question. May I suggest one that is a partial answer. And that is, there are very few Christians who are conscious that they are free from law. The man who is not conscious of freedom from law cannot for long be conscious of freedom from sin. Paul makes his point in this fashion.

In Romans 7:1 he raises a question—"Do you not know that the law is binding on a person only during his lifetime?" Then he takes a very practical illustration from life to try to reinforce the point that he is making. He talks about marriage and the relationship of the husband and the wife in the bond of marriage, or under the law of marriage. He says a woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law.

This is merely an illustration of a point that Paul wants to make in another realm. He immediately goes on in verse four to draw his application from his illustration. He says, "likewise my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ." Take note of this—"you have died to the law," and is "through the body of Christ," so that "you may be joined to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that you may bear fruit to God." For while we were living in the flesh our sinful passions aroused by the law are at work in our members bearing fruit for death. But now, we are discharged from the law, dead to that which has held us captive so that we serve not under the old, rigid code but in the new life of the spirit.

Now we can summarize what Paul is saying here in about one or two sentences. What he is saying is this: just as death breaks the marriage bond setting one free, so death in and through the body of Christ sets us free from law. That's the

message of the first six verses of Romans 7. As he says "you died to the law through the body of Christ" he is thinking of the fact that we have become one with Jesus in the act of committing ourselves to Christ and being united with Him in his death and burial and resurrection. He is saying then that we become dead to the law through becoming united to Him who actually died in His physical body and thereby made possible release from the law.

Paul goes on to say that having been released from the law we are released in order that we might be joined to another. Notice again verse four. "You have died to the law through the body of Christ so that you might belong to another," namely to the resurrected Jesus. We are released not only to belong to Christ, but we are released in order that we might serve. And so in verse six he says, "You have been discharged from the law so that we serve." And that service is not rendered under the old written code, but is a service that takes a place in the new life of the spirit. Here, then, Paul is declaring that the Christian is free from the law.

Seemingly very few Christians are aware of that truth. Some of you might think, that's not so. We are aware that we have been delivered from the law. Why, we have heard for years and years, and understand very clearly that the law of Moses was delivered by God through Moses to a special group of people, namely the nation of Israel. And that that law was to last for a specified period of time, that time terminating at the death of Jesus. And we know that in His death upon the cross, Christ fulfilled the prophecies and the requirements of the law and He set it aside. In fact we can quote a multitude of verses that indicate that very fact.

It's very well and good to be aware of those ideas. But the question still remains, if we are aware of that, why are we not aware of the freedom from sin? The answer so often is this.

People today have turned the New Testament into another Old Testament, thus short circuiting freedom. As they look at the New Testament they see it as nothing more than an updated version of what they consider the Old Testament to be. And thus, they are under law of the identical kind that they believe the Jews were under as they were submissive to the old covenant.

We need to pause and reflect upon the nature of law, any law system, including the Old Testament. First of all, the Old Testament was in its basic nature a written code that was an external governor. It was a code imposed upon man from without, to regulate his conduct. Secondly, the law of the Old Testament had many, many good qualities about it. Paul points out some of these in verse 12 of Romans 7. He says, "The law is holy and more than that, the law is just and the law is good."

At the same time and in the third place, the law of Moses had deficiencies about it. The deficiencies were not within what the law said. The deficiencies grew out of the imperfections of men who were charged with keeping the law. In writing Romans 8:3, Paul talks about what the law was to spell out what man must do. And the requirement being spelled out, man was then required to render a perfect obedience to that legal requirement. Where he could not render a perfect obedience, the law spoke again, this time imposing penalty. That was all the law could do. It could tell a man what to do and when he failed to do it it could bring punishment to bear in his life. The law, you see, demanded a complete obedience—perfect, absolute—there could be no failing in so much as one point.

You remember James 2:10—you've heard it quoted in many contexts. It says, "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in

one point has become guilty of all.” That is the nature of the Old Covenant. Also recall the statement that Paul made in Galatians 3:10 where he says, “All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, ‘cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to do them.’” Now notice what Paul is saying. God is compelled to impose a curse, a punishment, on every man who does not do two or three things: 1. The individual is to abide in or continue in. 2. He is to continue in all things written in the book of the law, not some, not most, all—doing them. And, so the individual who failed to continue doing continuously all of the things that the law requested is indicted and condemned. Such is the nature of the law. There’s nothing else that the law could do.

You can see then that law by its very nature had to focus on human deficiencies. Law does not have inherent within it motivational power. Law cannot provide a man with sufficient motivational power to follow through, and thus to put into practice continuously all of the high ethical concepts which the law awakened in his mind. The law offered, at least in promise, great things. But in practicality, because of the weakness of human flesh, it was able to deliver so very, very little.

And more than that, the law served the purpose of awakening a man’s conscience, by telling him right and wrong. The more sensitive the man, the more fully awakened his conscience, and thus of necessity the more reinforced his awareness of his deficiency, so that an individual who was exceedingly sensitive would have been exceedingly aware of the short comings of his own life and would have been driven almost to despair. The law then in a sense heightens sin. On occasions it even seemed to provoke sin. Law inevitably judges and condemns.

Some people today seem to have turned the New Testament into a new Old Testament. How? How can one do that—what

is involved? This is how people do that. I ask you to hear me through to the end of all that I have to say. It happens when people so stress obedience as to imply that a man must render a perfect sinless obedience to God. Our consciences tell us we have never done it. So does God's word. It comes to pass when people so stress obedience as to imply that a man deserves eternal life in direct proportion to the perfection of his obedience. Knowing that our obedience is not perfect, we feel indicted.

Men turn the New Testament into a new Old Testament when they minimize that which Jesus did and is doing. They somehow seem to stress, out of due proportion, the church which again focuses on what we do and what we say. Sometimes people have almost come to the conclusion that what Jesus did on the cross and what Jesus does as our priest mediator is merely something that supplements what we do. And nothing could be farther from the truth.

More than that, the implication that often comes through is that what Jesus did and what Jesus does can supplement what we do only when we offer God that perfect obedience, which for all practical purposes means never. There's another factor in turning the New Testament into a new Old Testament. It takes place when people disregard the dynamic divine power that God has placed in the heart and body and soul of the Christian, namely the Holy Spirit. Do you ever get the feeling that if you're going to Heaven you're going to have to get there solely on your own power? The impression is left that if you're going to heaven, it's going to be because you were willing to grit your teeth hard enough, and long enough and fight the thing through on your own strength with sufficient determination to be victorious. And frankly, the person who is really in touch with himself knows that he never succeeds for very long on that basis.

Again, the New Testament is turned into a new Old Testament when we view the New Testament simply as an external code, an external device imposed to regulate our lives from without. Now whenever these factors get into our minds, and come to govern our thinking about Christ and Christianity, dear people, we are not free from law. We still have an old covenant. We have simply labeled it "new covenant." The four points again:

1. Stressing obedience to the point of implying it must be perfect.
2. Minimizing what Christ has done, viewing it as that which merely supplements what I do.
3. Ignoring the power of the Holy Spirit that is our strengthening influence, implying that I must do it all on my own.
4. Relegating the New Testament to nothing more than an external code.

When that happens the only thing that a sensitive person can be aware of is his own deficiency. And an approach to religion on that basis, to the Christian religion, leaves out all of the inner forces that are the basis of our victory in practical day by day living for Jesus. Paul says, "We are set free from the law." Let's not make the New Testament another Old Testament. Paul says when we are set free to belong to another . . . to Jesus. He says we are set free to serve, verse 6. But he says that service is not under the old written code. It is not even under a covenant like the old covenant. You recall the prophecy. Jeremiah 31:31, "The days are coming saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Jacob, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant they did not keep." The new covenant is not like the old covenant. The new covenant is not a new Old Testament. And it is only when we see that, only

then can we begin to be aware of the basis and the meaning of freedom from sin. Because we are understanding freedom from law, as such.

Now, this is not to imply that there is no place for obedience. To imply such as that is absurd. It is downright funny. It is completely unbiblical and I have not said that. What does the word serve mean? It is just another term for obedience. And so he says we are set free to belong to Christ in order that we might serve.

The man who does not delight in obeying God's word does not have his heart in the right place. Obedience? Yes, that is a New Testament doctrine. Obedience simply in a ritualistic routine manner? No, that is not a New Testament doctrine. Obedience in the New Testament is to be an expression of faith, an expression of love, a demonstration of appreciation, but dear people—obedience in the New Testament is not a basis for gaining merit in the eyes of God. The only basis for merit before God is our union with Jesus Christ. For the only merit is Christ's merit. So what we need to do is not cast obedience aside—no one would advocate that—but put obedience in its proper place.

You see, as a doctrine in the New Testament, obedience results not from focusing on commandment but from focusing on the cross and the Christ who died upon the cross. You cannot prompt men to obey by citing commands and if you do, it will not be the kind of obedience that Christ wants. New Testament obedience is not the result of focusing on commandment, but is the result of focusing on the cross and the Christ. New Testament obedience is possible not because one is thrown on his own energies and strengths and has to muster up all of his will and grit his teeth and somehow grip his fists and strain his muscles—but rather, New Testament obedience is made possible because of the presence of God's

divine power, the Holy Spirit in our hearts, in our lives, reinforcing our own strengths and energies and will.

And the ultimate purpose of New Testament obedience—now listen carefully—is not to save, if by saving you mean gaining sufficient merit to go to heaven because you deserve to go. Because that simply can't be done. There is nobody in this group that has ever completely, totally, consistently obeyed all of God's will. And the man who says he has, is either blind with regard to his own life and conduct, or he is blind with regard to the statements and teachings of God's word or he's blind in both areas, and that is most likely. The ultimate purpose of New Testament obedience is not to save—it can't save in the sense of earning heaven for us. The purpose of New Testament obedience is to serve. It is an act of service. And in the process of thus serving the Christian comes little by little to be more and more like his Saviour.

Paul says, "We are free from the law." That is not an encouragement to license. Because you fear that some will take a statement of that kind and abuse it, do not in turn abuse scripture by saying we are not free from law. Paul said in Romans 6, "You are not under law, but under grace." The New Testament is intended to guide us into a life of humble, trusting service before Jesus. Let's not re-enact the tragedy that we can see in so many lives—that of reducing the New Testament to nothing more than an updated Old Testament. You are responsible before God and if you love your God and understand that which your Christ has done for you, no one will have to beat your back with the rod of commandment to demand that you do what Jesus says. And on the other hand, if you do not reverence your God and love your Saviour, all of the beatings through the infliction of commandment will never change a life. It is Jesus who changes lives.

Freedom in Christ also means freedom from the pressure of conformity. Life, society, and the church bring terrible pres-

tures on one to conform. Conformity in life style, style of dress, thought, practice . . . a hundred different areas! It seems that many church people have come to the conclusion that unity means conformity. Thus we are all to be the same; there is no place for diversity and individual development and performance. It is true that there are areas of oneness insisted upon by the New Testament. We are not denying that, nor would we want to tamper with those. But we must remember that Jesus saved us and freed us as individuals, with all of individual abilities, liabilities and possibilities. He freed you because he needed you. He appreciates the worth of your individuality and has special roles for you to fulfill. To allow ourselves to be hammered into uniformity is to thwart God's creative richness and his redemptive intention for you.

Romans 12:4 tells, "For as in one body there are many members, and all members do not have the same function, so we who are many are one body." We do not expect all the parts of the physical body to be alike. Paul says in I Corinthians 12, "If that is the case, then all are one member. All constitutes an eye, or an ear. Hence, where is the body? He goes on to say, "God has set in the body the organs as he chooses." And so God has freed you to be His person, to do what you can, to grow at your pace, to begin where you are and to work out your own salvation in your own way.

I remember an English teacher I had in the eleventh grade in high school. He was tough. He taught junior English on a college level. He made us work. And often we had a bad time of it with our grades. One of the things he did was to grade on a curve. Now that means that whatever the top score is on a test, that score is an "A" and all other grades are figured in relationship to that top score. Sometimes that is an advantage; sometimes it is not.

One time the top grade made by anyone was 54. On the curve system, that is an "A." There had to be so many "A's"

“B’s,” “F’s” and so forth. Well, it worked well when everyone had a low grade as in that case. But if the top grade was 99 and the bottom grade happened to be 75, then 75 becomes an “F” and that hurts. But that is the way a curve works.

It is a case of measuring one individual against another, rather than against some abstract universal. Now all of this is leading up to saying that God does not grade on a curve. He is not interested in comparing me with you or you with me. He does not say, “He is growing at that pace, and achieving this and this and this. And you are lagging way behind; therefore, you fail.” That would be pressure to make us conform and there is no such pressure in Christianity.

Unfortunately, some of us have lost sight of that fact. We have bound on others and upon ourselves concepts that are enslaving, ideas that are matters of culture and personal preference and have nothing whatever to do with the Biblical revelation. And we have chosen to label all who do not conform to our preferences with labels that do not belong in Christianity.

Truly it is divided, confused and running off in all directions. Why? Because it has no point of reference, no basis for bringing a unity to life. It has excluded God theoretically and practically. Many a believer, while including God theoretically, has practically excluded Him.

Freedom from conformity means freedom in terms of thought life. The man in Christ has nothing to fear from information, research, discussion and above all, thinking. In fact, we are set free that we might think. This is part of Philippians 2:12! And as God’s man exercises his right to think and study, he is not left alone. He is no more alone than he is alone when temptation comes. The Spirit of God is there to assist, the prayerful searching believer is assured (John 16:13).

Following Paul's example he has the right to pray (Col. 1:9), he is told (II Timothy 2:7, Luke 11:13). To Saul, to cease to do so would be to miss out on part of God's provision (Ephesians 1:16-18). And Christ himself has no fears for us as we engage in such. Freedom thus challenges us to think for ourselves . . . to think again regarding the meaning of life, the meaning of the Word, the meaning and appropriateness of our forms and the functions within our fellowships. We are free to examine and re-examine His Word, to look at the traditions that give shape to our lives and to consider the significance of the doctrines we hold.

Lest anyone misunderstand, let me hasten to say freedom in Christ is not of such a nature as to encourage one to be looking for opportunities to blast. Its purpose is not to uproot, nor is it concerned with change for the sake of change alone. But rather we are set free that we might seek to be genuinely Biblical in all that we say and do.

Wherever the true exists, the counterfeit springs up alongside. There is a false freedom, a liberty that advertises itself as liberty, that in reality is no liberty at all. It is out to attack, to criticize, to belittle, to reject. It masquerades as liberated and yet it mainly seeks its own self-willed ways. It is unwilling to accept the stern discipline of the Word. The false freedom we speak of won't let honest, seeking men come to any conclusions in their study of the Bible except those it wants. . . .which in too many cases seem to be exactly the conclusions of the past.

But the fact that this unfree freedom exists cannot stop genuine freedom from permeating the lives of those who are truly one with Him. Freedom allows us to study and question and come out where the Word leads us. This may be exactly where others have ended up or it may not. Ultimately part

of the irreducible minimum of Christianity is 1) absolute loyalty to Christ as Lord, 2) an attitude that takes the Word seriously and 3) a life lived as a loving servant of mankind. Now if this is so, then freedom as it thinks, studies, and questions, always does so in love. It always remains loyal to Christ first and foremost. . . .even before father or mother, sister or brother, whether in the flesh or in the spirit, brotherhood or eldership. And it always treats the Word seriously, that is, seeks to see what it says, and what it means for us today, being as true in God's intention as is humanly possible. Where men are not concerned with asking what does the Word say to me or to us in the here and now, there is no serious Bible study. There is instead a terrible bondage that turns the past into infallible truth. In many cases, it is this which is killing the church.

The man who is free in Christ is never willing to merely parrot the past or for that matter to parrot passages without asking about his own presuppositions and prejudices. Christ is our contemporary. He is alive and working today in this world. He speaks to us today and does so effectively. . . .not in terms of new revelations. . . .but through his Word. For Christ is free. His Word is free. It cannot be bound, just as He cannot be bound. Where a group of men arise seeking to encase His Word in the unchangeable molds of traditionalism, God inevitably reacts. He raises up new groups who will be more open and honest and allow His message to flow with more effectiveness, for the benefit of the lost.

Unfortunately this is not always the case in churches of Christ. This speaks of our poverty of liberty. A man is generally not allowed to question the old ways, our traditions and traditional concepts. He is resisted, rebuked, attacked as a heretic and a threat to the Lord's cause. He may be slandered and harassed. Many leaders, preachers and mem-

bers in the pew have a terrible fear of freedom at this point. Many feel divinely commissioned to immediately attempt to restrain any movement in the direction of free study and examination. Such is immediately branded license or liberalism.

All of the tactics aimed at restraining or suppressing the freedom to study, ask and think, are ultimately a confession of our own lack of confidence in God, God's power and His willingness to guide His people in their thinking, as well as a lack of confidence in God's people as a people loyal to the Lord they confess. Such reaction to freedom is a demand for a narrow, sectarian traditionalism. The pressure some in the church of Christ bring to compel men to line up with the status quo in thought, or get out, is unChristian, anti-freedom and anti-Christian. While it is many times sincerely advocated, it is but another form of the old man rising up and regaining control. The end is the bondage of sin, sin being self in control.

Where there is fear of freedom, there is an inadequate understanding of the Lord on the part of those who fear. There is superficiality of conversion. . . there is blindness to the real issues of the Word and the world, and there is a misunderstanding of the unity and loyalty the New Testament advocates. And it seems inevitably there is an absence of real Christian love.

The irony of it all is that freedom cannot be taken away from the man who is one with Christ. Since man did not bestow the gift, he cannot take it away. You can as easily take one's soul as to steal his freedom!

Though some may deny Christ's free man a pulpit, classroom or even a pew, they can never stop his involvement in

what Christianity is really all about. They cannot silence his voice speaking good news in the market places of the world. They cannot prevent him from encouraging his fellowman day by day. They cannot silence his joy and gratitude for Christ. They cannot shut off his capacity to love and bless. And this applies to each of you.

Where some have faltered and given up on the brotherhood over the matter of freedom, it is because they, like those who "gave" them up, have "Peter-like" allowed their focus to be shifted from Christ and their relationship with Him to fallible men and their imperfect natures who have harassed them out of the church.

Recognizing that we have been set free from conformity and from law will do much to eliminate the current polarization between those branded as "conservatives" and those someone tags as "liberals," or maybe a more accurate word would be "radicals." Now let me define what *I* mean by these two terms.

Literally, "conservatives" are people who want to preserve or conserve the past. This means that they are therefore basically opposed to and resistant to change. This is the proper meaning of the term. On the other hand, "radical" refers to people who are in rebellion against what is inherited from the past. They are committed to and often agitate for change.

One of our basic problems in all aspects of life is balance. It is so easy to become overbalanced in one direction or another. And when we do, we want to force all other people into some kind of conformity with our camp. If they refuse, we feel there is nothing left to do but to push them into an opposite position. And the labels and accusations fly! All such activity is a symptom of no awareness of what freedom is all about.

Actually every Christian ought to be both a conservative and a radical at one and the same time. Truth is not found in either posture, but in embracing both. The task of the church is to conserve God's revelation, to guard the deposit left with us and to proclaim it and argue for it in the world. For that reason every Christian ought to be a conservative. Our task is not to be inventing new gospels, new theologies, new moralities or new Christianities. We are to hold fast to and contend for the one and only eternal gospel. God's revelation of Himself is complete in Jesus and the testimony of the apostles. It is preserved in the New Testament. It cannot be altered, modified or changed in any way. May I borrow a quote at this point: "The Church's first task is to keep the good news intact. It is better to speak of the habit of mind which this calling requires as 'conservationist' rather than 'conservative,' for the latter word easily suggests an antiquarian addiction to what is old for its own sake and a blanket resistance to new thinking, and this is not what we are talking about at all. Antiquarianism and obscuratism are vices of the Christian mind, but conservationism is among its virtues."

Our problem arises out of the fact that some good brethren do not limit their conservatism to Biblical theology. Rather, they are conservative in their basic temperament in all areas of life. They are conservative in their life-style, finances, politics, economics, dress, hair style and social outlook.

A "radical," on the other hand, is someone who asks hard-nosed awkward questions of the status quo. He does not accept any tradition, practice, interpretation or institution as beyond examination. He worships no sacred cows. Rather, he is ready to subject anything and everything inherited from the past to careful microscopic scrutiny. And this process of examination often, though not always, leads him to want reform, change, and non-violent revolution.

Such a person recognizes how fast the world of today is changing. He is aware of Alvin Toffler's "future shock," but he is not shocked by it, for he knows that God is in control and is working at all levels of life in the rapidly changing process of history. Thus the radical sees changes as inevitable. He accepts it, welcomes it and sometimes even initiates it!

Jesus himself was our model here, as elsewhere in the Christian life. What many have not realized is that He was both a conservative and a radical. And He was both at one and the same time! For example, He was conservative in His attitude toward Scripture. He said, "Scripture cannot be broken . . . I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill . . ." One of Jesus' chief complaints against the religious leaders of His day was their disrespect for Scripture. He cited them for a lack of genuine submission to God's authority.

And yet our Lord was truly a radical. He was a regular unbending critic of the Jewish establishment of His day. He pointed out their insufficient loyalty to God's word. He also judged their exaggerated loyalty to their own human traditions. He called for casting aside the "tradition of the elders" which had accumulated over the centuries, so that men might see and do the real will of God. He dared to break social convention, when they stood in the way of ministering God's grace to those who were most open to it. Jesus refused to be bound by human custom and culture; He would listen only to the word of His Father.

Our task is to follow our Teacher in terms of being both conservative and radical. And we can do this because we are set free in Christ and that freedom has practical implications in just these ways. In all of this He is our model of what freedom means. Indeed, we must be both, if we are to be loyal to Him. Freedom demands both. To disallow either is to deny

a man his freedom in the Lord. We'll come back to this in a moment.

What this means is that we need to work hard at distinguishing between Scripture and culture or tradition. Scripture is eternal, the product of the mind of God. Tradition or culture, is human, the result of man's collective activity. In our church life it is a blend of church tradition (social convention and artistic creativity). . .and all religious movements have their traditions. Culture has no eternal authority. It cannot claim immunity to criticism and reform. And in fact, God sits in regular judgement of all culture.

Culture changes from time to time and from place to place. It is our task as God's coworkers to subject our present culture. . . both the wider American heritage we share and our church of Christ tradition. . . to continuous Biblical scrutiny. Here we return to the idea of being conservative and radical to be free. Only then are we really true to our calling. As Leighton Ford said, "God is not tied to seventeenth—century English, nor to eighteenth—century hymns, not nineteenth—century architecture, nor to twentieth—century clichés." Nor, we might add, to current white, middle-class, social conventions. We are free to be free.

We are free both to resist change and to agitate for change. When we resist change we must ask ourselves whether in reality we are defending Scripture, as we inevitably contend, or rather some cherished tradition which springs from roots no deeper than our cultural heritage. This is not to suggest that all traditions, just because they are traditions, are to be swept away. Man cannot live apart from traditions. Uncritical attacks on tradition for the sheer sake of attacking tradition are as stupid as uncritical conservatism.

When we do exercise our freedom to be free in questioning and thinking, we must be sure it is not the Bible against which

we are reacting. Sometimes a spirit of anti-authority so permeates our lives that it leads us to resist even the authority and disciplining work of God through His Word.

More often than we like to admit. . . .or even realize, we invest our cultural ideas and practices with an authority, truth and timelessness which belongs only to the Word. They are part of our security and when they are threatened we feel endangered. So we react naturally. . . .as the old man does. . . .and defend them unrelentingly.

At other times we may also be guilty of not taking the Bible seriously enough. It is easy to refuse to live under the authority of God's Word, especially when someone has used what he contends is his commitment to the Word to beat us down. Ultimately we are called upon to walk a tightrope, neither resisting all change nor agitating for total change. And even where we seek change we must keep away from mindless destruction. Because of the seriousness of religion. . . .and its timeless implications, we need to recognize that the greater danger to freedom is in terms of being too tradition bound and so resisting one of life's most unpleasant experiences, change.

Freedom in Christ is also freedom from the divided life. The world is filled with people living fractured lives. This internal division is the cause of much of the frustration and sense of uselessness that fills many a heart. In the language of the Bible, we are talking about double-mindedness. The result is that a man can't seem to get it all together. Life seems to be only so many unrelated pieces. There is no glue to stick the pieces together. There is no valid point of reference to bring unity and meaning into one's existence. Man must have an infinite personal point of reference.

But let me sketch out some of the categories of the divided life. We have been taught to pigeonhole all of life into

categories that remain separate closed sections within our existence. Thus we distinguish between the spiritual and the material, as if the material had no spiritual significance, and as if to be spiritual, something or someone has to be out of touch with the tangible world. We do the same thing with the concepts of "sacred" and "secular." And yet for the man of God all of life partakes of sacredness; he cannot make this kind of division. Then there is the division of our time, money, work, etc., into those that are "mine" and those that are "God's." This leads to some rather absurd distinctions regarding the church "treasury" for example.

One who comes at life like this, is always hop-scotching from one category to another, and trying to somehow piece it all into some sort of a unified whole. But there is no way. The life of the believer is not a series of pigeonholes but a unity. Once one is in Christ there is freedom from this kind of division. Harmony exists, peace comes, purpose is clear and the basis for berating ourselves for not doing more for the Lord is removed. In Christ, nothing is insignificant—no act, no word, no event, no possession or relationship. And above all, we as persons are not insignificant.

The fact that this problem exists confuses us and increases our sense of guilt, shows how much the secular world with all of its values, views and categories has influenced us.

Like so many of the great themes of the Bible, there is a paradox about freedom in Christ. It is like Jesus' statement, "he that would save his life will lose it, and he that would lose his life for my sake will find it." Obviously there is tension in that statement. It is a paradox.

And so it is with freedom in Christ. There is a paradox in it, too. We see it several times in the New Testament. Romans

6:17-18 states, "Thanks be to God that whereas you were the servants of sin, you became obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were delivered, and being made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness." Notice the paradox. Man, the slave of sin, is set free only to discover that that freedom involves being a slave. There is another master waiting there—Jesus.

The same tension is seen in Galatians 5. Paul declares, "For freedom Christ set us free." A moment later he charges, "But in love be servants one of another." Set free for the sake of freedom, and yet we are to live in the freedom as though we are servants. Passages of this kind could be multiplied.

And so freedom is free. It is a gift given by God because of the unlimited worth of Christ. It is inherently involved in the whole concept of forgiveness. And yet, at the same time, freedom is not free. That is, it is not without its restraints.

The idea that man can live a totally free life, that is, one without restraining, controlling factors, is an illusion. We are never totally free from restraining powers. This can be illustrated in the world of nature. Space exploration is an instance. Through the marvels of scientific technology, man has found the means of breaking out of the grasp of gravity. He can hurl himself upward with sufficient force to break through into the part of space where weightlessness is the order of the day. Here is man overcoming a restraining influence. And yet to do it, he must restrict himself as he was never restricted on earth. Special suits, equipment, space capsules with all of their artificial atmosphere, etc. How restricted and confined is the astronaut!

In Christ we are free but freedom in Christ is not license. Rather it involves a life of rigorous discipline. Discipline is the

only guarantee of freedom from the tyranny of our unpredictable carnal nature. The life that is lived without any control is not more free than the ship without a rudder is free. Such a vessel is at the mercy of the weather and sea. It is bound as never before. It is the athlete that disciplines his body vigorously, or the musician who practices faithfully, who are able to perform in the finest way.

Freedom can only be entrusted to responsible people. And it can exist only so long as men are careful to allow the rule of Christ to operate in their lives. Roman 7 speaks a bit about this. "You have died to the law through the body of Christ," the author asserts. Then he adds, "You are dead to that which held you captive." The end of it all is, "that you might be joined to another, that is, to Christ."

John Allen Chalk correctly wrote that freedom is the mind of Christ. But to have and maintain the mind of Christ calls for strenuous commitment to the Christ. It calls for unfailing prayer and a regular heart-searching approach to the Word of the Lord. It calls for faith, that is, trust of the kind that is willing to wait on God, seek God, accept His correction and diligently root out the old man and the old way of life.

Loyalty to the Lord is the result of an all consuming love for Jesus which is the result of seeing and accepting not only the verdict of the cross, but also its provision. Thomas Aquinas said, "The just are not under the law. Love gives one the inclination to do the very thing which is prescribed by the Law." What is it that guarantees freedom in the political realm? Not law, nor armies, but the spirit of the people. In the same way Christ does not force himself upon us but seeks to love His way into our hearts. And as we see and accept that love we can do nothing except love Him and serve Him in return. And yet in that service there is the freedom to be all

that God meant us to be. There is the freedom to rise to the heights that God designed us for.

First we have to ask, what are the limits of freedom? Basically there are two. One is God-ward in direction. The other is manward and is dependent on the first limit. The God-ward limit is truth. The man-ward limit is love in the exercise of the rights granted to us by truth.

Freedom and truth are closely linked. In fact, there is no freedom apart from truth. Again, let's illustrate it from a human point of view. Remember, "truth" in the Bible equals "reality." It is far more than some sort of abstract assertion about something. The opposite of truth then is falsehood. But the falseness of falsehood is that it does not square with reality, that is, things as they really are.

The person who does not know the realities of the world of nature is bound by superstition. And what an enslaving force that is! The primitive man does not understand the science of astronomy. So he does not understand how and why an eclipse of the sun or moon takes place. He is left to speculate in his ignorance and his ignorant mind comes up with explanations that seem very foolish to us. He may conceive of a dragon eating up the sun, for example. His problem is that he is out of touch with truth. And in that condition he is bound, enslaved by ignorant superstition.

Now God's man is supposedly in touch with reality, that is, with truth. Ultimately that truth or reality is no other than Jesus Himself. It also involves what Jesus has told us of ourselves, our world and our needs and His solutions to all of the above. The more we know of truth, the more of it that we make our own and commit ourselves to live by, the more we are free. Remember Jesus' statement, "And you shall know

the truth and the truth shall make you free.” The more we press in to know God’s truth, the more we can appreciate the richness of our freedom. In fact, the more we are aware of just how free we really are. Where we leave truth, whether through neglect, or deliberately choosing falsehood, unreality, there we are immediately bound. That is why so many Christians are so unaware of the wonder of their freedom. They spend so little time with the One who is Truth and with His Word. They are out of touch.